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THE ROSSETTIS

WITHDRAWN

Sept 20
1855

THE ROSSETTIS

DANTE GABRIEL

AND

CHRISTINA

BY

ELISABETH LUTHER CARY

ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

THE KNICKERBOCKER PRESS

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PREFACE.

IN writing of Rossetti I have written of a man who cannot by any possibility be known through one biographer alone. Those who came in contact with him received impressions as various as strong, and he has been to a singular extent the object of both eulogy and detraction. In his letters he gives a presentation of himself undoubtedly faithful so far as it goes, but it does not go very far. In his poems and in his pictures we find revelations of his attitude toward life which to a large degree supplement the letters, and in the numerous and frequently contradictory opinions expressed by his companions we have many glimpses of an individuality that puzzled them despite the frankness with which it was manifested to them, or perhaps because of that frankness.

To trace the true Rossetti by these clues is a task that could successfully be accomplished only by one who could reinforce them by personal knowledge, but to give an impression in which the striking peculiarities of Rossetti's recorded actions shall not

take precedence over his essential qualities and discernible motives ought not to be impossible to anyone with the already published material at hand, and to this end I have directed my efforts. My general estimate of his character and temperament has been directly influenced, not merely by this published material, but to a considerable degree by a correspondence now in the possession of Mr. Samuel Bancroft, Jr., of Wilmington, Delaware, to whose cordial generosity I owe the opportunity of thus seeing Rossetti as he appeared at moments of absolute unreserve. To Mr. Bancroft I am also indebted for the invaluable privilege of studying characteristic examples of Rossetti's work precisely as he would have wished them to be studied; in the home, that is, of their owner, and among surroundings suited to them.

In Mr. Bancroft's house hang the *Lady Lilith*, the *Found*, the *Magdalen*, the *Water Willow*, the *Ruth Herbert* study in gold and umber, the portrait in coloured chalks of Mr. F. R. Leyland, and an early study of still-life belonging to the years preceding Pre-Raphaelitism,—a collection representative of almost every period and style known to Rossetti's art. By the courtesy of the owner, reproductions of all these save the last two, have been made for the present book directly from the originals which in two cases (the *Ruth Herbert* and the *Magdalen*) have never before been reproduced. The drawing by Frederick Shields of Rossetti after

death is also reproduced from the original pencil sketch in the possession of Mr. Bancroft to whom thanks are due as well for the loan of many valuable autotypes by which comparatively satisfactory illustrations of Rossetti's work were insured.

Upon these contributions the greater part of the interest of the book beyond that of other Rossetti books depends. In taking this opportunity for special acknowledgment of the debt, I realise that no acknowledgment can adequately measure the extent to which my work has thus been furthered.

I wish also to express my obligation to Mr. W. J. Stillman and to Mr. P. B. Wight for their full and prompt response to my inquiries, and to Mr. Russell Sturgis for the loan of *The Crayon* and *The New Path*.

The two chapters on Christina Rossetti bear to the rest of the text much the proportion borne, perhaps, by her limited life and product to her brother's more complicated career. In laying stress upon elements of her character not much dwelt upon by previous writers, I have not, I trust, overstepped the bounds of reasonable inference, and have not to my own mind, certainly, lessened the appeal of her peculiar charm and distinction.

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CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY.

IN the case of the Rossettis the biography of any one individual may very well seem "only an episode in the epic of the family," so striking is the character of each generation that we can trace. The name itself indicates that somewhere among the Della Guardias, from whom the family are descended, occurred a blond branch to which the nickname Rossetti, or "reddish people," was attached and clung. Dante Gabriel Rossetti himself retained a suggestion of this ruddy tinge in the colour of his hair, which was dark, but with a certain auburn brightness, slow to fade out of it.

Mr. Knight has described Dante Gabriel's grandfather, Nicola Rossetti, as "connected with the iron trade," but Mr. William Rossetti speaks of him simply as a blacksmith of very moderate means and a "somewhat severe and irascible nature," living in the little Italian town of Vasto on the Adriatic coast, about eighteen miles from Termoli. In this artisan of remote Abruzzo we get a forewarning of the

poignant sensibility that caused more than one turbulent epoch in the career of his gifted grandson. He died, in fact, from wounded feelings, shortly after the French-republican invasion of the Kingdom of Naples in 1799, when the French put some affront upon him. "I believe," Mr. William Rossetti writes, "they gave him a sound beating for failing or neglecting to furnish required provisions, and, being unable to stomach this, or to resent it as he would have liked, his health declined, and soon he was no more."

As a mortuary inscription to him reads, he "poor and honourable, lovingly sent in boyhood to their first studies his sons, carefully nurtured in childhood."

Of these sons there were four, all of whom earned some degree of notice in verse-making, and three of whom became more or less distinguished, Gabriele (father of Dante Gabriel), the most so, showing from his youth extraordinary aptitude in writing, in drawing, and in music. His beautiful tenor voice made his companions feel that he was putting aside an obvious career in declining to train himself for the operatic stage. His fine little drawings in the sepia which he himself extracted from the cuttlefish seem to his son William, who has spent his life among artists, of surpassing merit in their especial line. His writing procured him in his own country and in England a fame not lasting, perhaps, but genuine.

While he was in Italy and very young he wrote

largely in verse, and the following little poems will show something of the quality of his lyrical gift, which was more agreeable than impressive.

AMORE E SPEMA.

Gemelli in petto a noi
Nascono Amore e Speme,
Vivono sempre insieme,
Muoiono insieme ancor.

Troppo ne' vezzi tuoi,
Troppo, o crudel, ti fidi,
Se ni me la Speme uccidi,
Con essa uccidi Amor.

LOVE AND HOPE.

Like twins in our bosom are born
The passions of Love and Hope,
They know no separate scope,
Together they live and die.

Cruel Lady, beware, to scorn,
Too much you confide in your charm,
If the hope in my heart you should harm
Love, stricken, beside it must lie.

LA RIMEMBRANZA.

Qui la vidi ; e si specchiava
Su' quest' onda si tranquilla :
Qui s'accorse ch' io guardava,
E si tinse di rossor :

Ah, d'allor che se mi piacque
Quella languidor pupilla,
I susurri di quest' acque
Par che parlino d'amor.[1]

[1] See article on "The Rossettis," by William Sharp, in the *Fortnightly Review* for 1886.

RECOLLECTION.

Here I saw her bending over,
Mirrored on the tranquil stream :
Here she saw me look and love her,
And a ruddy red she grew.

Since, that lingering glance recalling,
As it pleased my lover's dream,
I hear the waters speak in falling,
Murmuring Love—and Love, anew.

His poems were chiefly, however, of a patriotic order and stirring to the popular mind, so much so that they brought him into difficulties with the king, against whom they were not perhaps directed but to whom they proved extremely offensive. When, for example, Ferdinand I. granted a constitution to Naples in 1820, Rossetti hailed the dawn of the fortunate day with an ode commencing "Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine" (Lovely art thou with stars in hair) which charmed the Neapolitans. As the brief period of independence closed in 1821 with the king's abolition of the constitution, Rossetti, then occupying the post of Curator of Ancient Marbles and Bronzes in the Museum of Naples, was denounced and proscribed with his fellow constitutionalists. He succeeded by the aid of Sir Graham Moore in getting to Malta, whence, after a stay of two years and a half, he went to England, to remain there for the rest of his life.

Shortly after his arrival in England he became acquainted with the Polidori family, the same to which Byron's erratic physician belonged, and otherwise notable for a tendency to long life on the part

of its members, nine of them attaining an average age of eighty-eight years, and for their bookish tastes and aptitude in learning languages.

Falling in love with the second daughter, Frances Mary Lavinia, Rossetti married her in 1826. By the end of 1830 they had four children ; Maria Francesca, born on the 17th of February, 1827 ; Gabriel Charles Dante, later called Dante Gabriel, on the 12th of May, 1828 ; William Michael, on the 25th of September, 1829 ; and Christina Georgina, on the 5th of December, 1830.

Both Rossetti and his wife were keenly alive to the obligations of family life, and these children, so nearly of an age that the four, according to their mother's notion, were no more trouble than one to rear, were provided with all the comforts necessary to their well-being. A good physician and more books than usually appear in households of small means were counted among the necessities. A comfortable scale of living adapted to hearty appetites was maintained through all variations of income, and no butcher or baker or candle-stick maker, says Mr. William Rossetti, had ever a claim upon them for sixpence unpaid. An honourable dinginess and threadbare aspect were much preferable to debt, and there were no absurd devices for "keeping up appearances," a hearty contentment with very simple ways of living characterising parents and children.

Teaching was the most available means of livelihood for one in Rossetti's position, and from 1831

until 1844 he occupied the Italian Professorship in King's College, London. He also wrote from a curious point of view a number of books on Dante Alighieri, whose "darkness of the exiled years" he shared, adding to it the pathetic physical darkness of failing sight, but never wholly losing the lightness of heart that keeps the most serious Italian as a little child in certain ways of thinking and behaving. Lowell quotes from his *Disamina* the following passage that shows, despite its touch of grandiloquence, the gallant ideal by which he shaped his course of passionate study:

"My Italy, my sweetest Italy, for having loved thee too much I have lost thee, and perhaps — ah! may God avert the omen! But more proud than sorrowful for an evil endured for thee alone, I continue to consecrate my vigils to thee alone — An exile full of anguish, perchance availed to sublime the more in thy Alighieri that lofty soul which was a beautiful gift of thy smiling sky; and an exile equally wearisome and undeserved now avails, perhaps, to sharpen my small genius so that it may penetrate into what he left written for thy instruction and for his glory."

Lowell adds to this quotation the words,— "Rossetti is himself a proof that a noble mind need not be narrowed by misfortune. His *Comment* (unhappily incomplete) is one of the most valuable and suggestive."

National sentiment never waned or flickered with

this ardent-minded exile. Although he liked much that was English, — the English standard of morality, the English Constitution, the English people, English coal-fires and English beer, — the companions of his choice, those who gathered in his plain rooms and formed the circle of his daily interests, were his countrymen.

"To be an Italian, was a passport to his good-will," Mr. William Rossetti declares, "and whether the Italian was a nobleman, a professional gentleman, a small musical hanger-on, a maccaroni man, or a mere waif and stray churned by the pitiless sea of expatriation, he equally welcomed him, if only he were an honest soul and not a *spia* (spy). Hardly an organ-man or plaster-cast vender passed our street-door without being interrogated by my father, 'Di che pæse siete?' ('What part of Italy do you come from?')"

Thus the Rossetti children were brought early into contact with an amazing number and variety of people, — musicians, painters, writers, scholars, venders, teachers, politicians: some of them singular figures of heroic and unquiet aspect; not all of them wholly decent and reputable; a few of them, as Mazzini and members of the Bonaparte family, closely connected with events that were to pass into history.

They thronged about Rossetti, chiefly, it would seem, for the satisfaction of discussing Italian politics and denouncing Louis Philippe, Rossetti taking a vehement part and contributing to the zest of the

occasion by reciting from his own patriotic poems and keeping his visitors in a whirl of emotion. No food for the physical man save "a cup or two of tea or of coffee with a slice of bread and butter," either stimulated or interfered with intellectual feasts, and, in fact, a larger hospitality would have been difficult, as Rossetti's declining health and a preference in the public mind for German in place of Italian forced the family to "a real tussle for the means of subsistence" during the latter part of his life.

The four children, busying themselves with their own affairs, nevertheless took in much of the animated discourse that went on about them with the result, on Dante Gabriel's part, at least, of a hearty indifference to current politics as he grew up, and a general tendency to depart from his father's opinions regarding subjects on which they both spent thought and feeling. How much unconscious influence was exerted over them all by the dramatic, emotional atmosphere and the continual exchange of vehement ideas, cannot in the least be estimated, as their minds and characters developed along quite independent lines despite the underlying family likeness among them.

Where they were English and not Italian, however, they drew either from the single English strain in their mother's family, or were shaped by their associations outside their homes. On their father's tombstone is engraved the line from Jeremiah, "He shall return no more to see his native country," nor

did he ever go back in the flesh, but he did all that he could to surround himself and his children with the very breath and spirit of Italy.

Their mother is described as having an English rather than Italian aspect, but Dante Gabriel, in drawing her, accentuated a few strikingly Italian characteristics about the mouth and eyes. She was religious in temperament, extremely domestic, fond of reading, simple and dignified in manner, warm in feeling, steady in action; a fortress of defence for her children and for her husband, against the difficulties that assailed them. That she was not altogether blinded by her affections is indicated by a remark made in her old age and quoted with considerable relish by her son William, to whom perhaps it applied as little as to any member of the family. "I always had a passion for intellect," she said, "and my wish was that my husband should be distinguished for intellect, and my children too. I have had my wish, and I now wish that there were a little less intellect in the family so as to allow for a little more common sense."

To her children she was always more or less a heroine, the object of their unbounded admiration as of their love. Christina resembled her in face, as we can see from Dante Gabriel's portrait of the mother and daughter side by side, the one in advanced age, the other in middle life but looking in certain marked respects the elder of the two. Of the household these were the two inseparable ones,

who clung to each other in sickness and in health: but that there was not in any case any barrier of formality between mother and children is thoroughly attested by Dante Gabriel's letters, in which a great display of filial tenderness goes with unconstrained playfulness of address. "Good Antique," he writes, or "Dearest Darling," or "I shall certainly see you in an evening or two, you dear old thing," or, "There is an aunt of Miss Boyd's—a year or two younger than your funny old self!"

Her long, careful management of a household difficult to manage under the best of circumstances seems to have confirmed in her habits of economy that persevered long after they were strictly necessary. Dante Gabriel writes to a friend in 1873 that he is sending his "poor old Mummy" a sealskin cloak as a present, as she and Christina on a previous visit "had only a small rug between them." "My Mummy travels," he adds, "with a trunk all over nails which she has had ever since she was sixteen. It is covered with deerskin and is very curious. It is still as good as new for all purposes, and has on it her initials before she was married."

Up to the age of seven or eight all the children got what teaching they had from their mother, and the two girls were educated entirely by her. Her methods could not have been lax or ineffective, as Dante Gabriel, anything but a student by temperament, could read with ease, write legibly, and spell with perfect correctness when at the age of five or

six he copied out his first poem, "The Slave," in which the blank verse also was correct in accent and number of feet, a fact that does not seem to Mr. William Rossetti particularly surprising, since he cannot remember, he says, any time, when, knowing what a verse was, they did not also know and feel what a correct verse was.

The prompt command of these "tools of the mind" quickly resulted with all the children in fervent literary and artistic interests. Dante Gabriel, who "surged through the pages of his Shelley like a flame," at sixteen, was "ramping" through Scott's poems at eight or nine, and before he was seven was illustrating *Henry VI.*, *Hamlet* having been the chief love of his fifth year, with *Faust* to follow it. Since Mr. Watts-Dunton has written of him as the great protagonist of the "Renascence of the Spirit of Wonder in poetry and art," it is interesting to observe his delight as a boy in works dealing with mysteries beyond human experience. His taste for ghosts was even stronger than that of the average child, and he had a fine discrimination regarding them. He always knew the difference, his brother tells us, between the ghost in *Hamlet* and a ghost by Monk Lewis. Brigands pleased him, also, and murderers, but the romance of love with which he was later to be so much occupied, he greeted with ecstasies of scorn. "Often and fatuously did they laugh" over Coleridge's "Genevieve," the poem which Dante Gabriel marked in one of his latest years with the word

"Perfection," and for which he made in his twenty-first year an exquisite illustration in pen and ink, sitting up the whole of an August night to perfect it. Christina Rossetti, who, "compared with the rest of the family, read very little," also knew her Shakespeare and Scott at an early age, and became acquainted with Keats when she was nine. Maria, whose disposition was studious, liked history and Grecian mythology and had an "Iliad fit" at twelve or thirteen.

It is not surprising to find that with these tastes the Rossettis were not game-loving or athletic children. Dante Gabriel in particular is described as having no ambition whatever in these directions. Neither did he take any delight whatever in the arts of handicraft, with all his heart disliking whatever required mechanical skill or dexterity. Not even Polidori's printing-press alluringly situated in a summer-house tempted him to investigation of its too practical problems, and he tried few amusements that required practice and exercise. He once joined Ford Madox Brown for a time in rifle-shooting at a target, and by a happy chance hit the bull's-eye with his first shot, raising false hopes in the breast of his instructor. After that, however, he never even hit the target. Mr. Stephens declares that to call him a rower is certainly an error, since when he was in his boat he proposed to throw over one of the stretchers because it was in his way. He never cared to swim, nor could he ride.

This strain of incapacity accounts in a measure for his inability to master the technical side of his own beautiful art. To draw consummately demands, as a basis at least, something of the constructive power essential to a bridge-builder, and as much persistent discipline as the average boy is willing to give to his athletics! Rossetti had little constructive power, and could not discipline himself in work or play. If he had not been marvellously gifted with the faculty of visualising his ideas, and moulding them clumsily but powerfully into form upon the flat canvas, he must have been lost as a painter.

In place of active sports and lively games, the Rossetti children put rhyming, painting, and acting, showing no great precocity in any one of these directions, but a general quickness of interest and alertness of mind. They were much like the delightful children of whom Stevenson writes out of his full knowledge of his own quaint childhood. They walked in a vain show and among mists and rainbows, "passionate after dreams and unconcerned about realities." Like Stevenson, too, they knew "Skeltery" and were incessantly buying sheets of "a penny plain and two-pence coloured," preferring the plain for the joy of colouring the engraved figures with true Pre-Raphaelite hues, bright red, blue, and yellow. The drawings made by Dante Gabriel in his noble attempt to illustrate the *Iliad* are condemned by his brother as "not in any tolerable degree good or even promising," although the two

examples reproduced in Marillier's splendid volume are unquestionably above the attainment of the average child of a dozen years. There are, however, no stories of youthful accomplishment to vie with the prodigious feats of Millais's infancy.

One impish trick recorded of Dante Gabriel deserves mention not at all for its cleverness, which is somewhat wanting, but because it marks the first showing of that irrepressible instinct for "play-acting" which was with him at his birth, and which did not leave him till his death — which in fact made the terrible last months of his life more pitiable and gruesome than anything else could have done. When he was about five years old he had a habit of walking in the street in an attitude of deformity until he attained his desired result, an expression of sympathy on the part of a passer-by. Then he would straighten up, and run away laughing. How similar to this picture of him is that given by Mr. Watts-Dunton after his death in an effort to give a true impression of the cheerful side of his character, which this friend thought had been too much ignored. "The truth is," he writes, "that there was in him a sort of wilfulness of the spoilt child, unreasonable, and to me unaccountable, which impelled him, except when alone with me, to assume that gloom and that air of the misanthrope which deceived even his brother. And the only excuse — if indeed there be one — for the distressing asperities which disfigure my old friend Bell Scott's mention of him in his

autobiography is to be found in this fantastic whim, so painful to many a friend and so cruelly unjust to himself."

The picture of the household as a whole, gained from the very few writers who remember its earlier years, is that of a strongly united little group, with almost complete similarity of tastes, living a little apart from the world about them and sufficient to each other for entertainment and companionship, developing each one rather slowly to a certain point, and then abruptly attaining great maturity of expression and thought, and taking life as it came with directness and a certain kind of simplicity not incompatible with great complexity of nature. In Dante Gabriel, in particular, this simplicity was one of the dominant enlightening characteristics by which many most wayward manifestations might be explained, and through which a great confusion of result was frequently arrived at. It is also the stamp by which Christina's poetry is known from all other poetry which in other respects resembles hers.

Christina and Dante Gabriel are naturally the figures that stand out most plainly from the family group, and different as they came to be, the two little creatures look much alike in the long perspective of their childhood. Both made illustrative drawings, Christina's of little merit; both wrote poetry as a kind of game, Christina showing the greater cleverness in this perhaps; both had hearts overflowing with affectionate interest in animals of

every conceivable description, from dormice and hedgehogs at home to the armadillos, sloths, tigers, and elephants, of the Zoological Gardens; both had, it would seem, rather irritable tempers and not very firm health, and both were desultory in their habits of study.

Maria is said to have epitomised the temperaments of all four children, declaring that she herself had the good sense, William the good nature, Gabriel the good heart, and Christina the bad temper of their beloved father and mother![1]

By the beginning of 1837 the two boys were both in school; first at a little day-school kept by a Rev. Mr. Paul, and later at the King's College Day-School, where Dante Gabriel stayed five and William Rossetti eight years. This first experience of rubbing against the outside world after the close seclusion of their home life was not entirely happy. We learn from William Rossetti that Dante Gabriel was usually pretty near the head of his classes, that when he left school he could write an excellent hand, was up to Sallust, Ovid, and Virgil, in Latin, knew something of Greek which he promptly forgot, understood French well enough to plunge into French novels, and had "some inkling on subjects of history, geography, etc.," but learned "nothing whatever" of "anything even distantly tending to science," such as algebra and geometry. This was not a poor equipment for a boy of fourteen; but from his broth-

[1] See Mackenzie Bell's *Christina Rossetti: a Biographical and Critical Study.*

er's dark allusions both boys suffered much moral deterioration through the wickedness of their schoolfellows, and constant exposure to an atmosphere that "reeked too perceptibly of unveracity, slipperiness, and shirking." Dante Gabriel's own picture of his schoolboy aspect is painted in the gloomiest colours. He was destitute of personal courage, shrank from the amusements of his fellows, was afraid of their quarrels, and although not wholly without generous impulses, was in the main selfish of nature and reclusive in habit of life. William Rossetti substitutes "self-willed" for selfish, and denies that his brother was a coward, admitting that he was not fond of "that loutish horse-play and that scrambling pugnacity which are so eminently distinctive of the British stripling." Certainly he did not at the King's College School, or any other, gain the exact habits, the "instruments of true thought," which Bagehot calls the "very keys and openings, the exclusive access" to the knowledge beloved of youth. He diligently nursed his fancies and fed his sympathies, and turned a cold shoulder to discipline in all its forms. He knew this foe under every conceivable disguise and never was cajoled into showing a friendliness for it that he was far from feeling.

In 1842[1] he left the King's College School (William remaining three years longer), to commence regularly his art education. The drawing academy known as "Sass's" and kept by F. S. Cary, the son

[1] Mr. William Rossetti now thinks 1841.

of the translator of Dante, was the natural place to choose at that time, and Dante Gabriel spent there about four years in studying the antique and the human skeleton, and learning perhaps as little as one so greatly endowed could learn of these preliminaries to the making of pictures. By his fellow student, J. A. Vintner, he is remembered as wayward and brusque, affectionate, generous, boisterous, unapproachable, and generally contradictory. "A bare throat, a falling, ill-kept collar, boots not over familiar with brushes, black and well-worn habiliments, including not the ordinary jacket of the period, but a loose dress-coat which had once been new—these were the outward and visible signs of a mood which cared even less for appearances than the art-student of those days was accustomed to care, which undoubtedly was little enough." With this unpromising exterior he had, when addressed, a manner that was courteous, gentle, winsome, and marked by cultivation and the air of good breeding.

From Cary's he went in 1846 to the Antique School of the Royal Academy, where he stayed a couple of years without making marked progress. Six years of drawing from the antique with anatomical study might have been expected to ground him in the fundamental principles of an orthodox art education in England, and to prepare him for the long course of drawing from the nude which must have followed had he been a Frenchman. And, as a matter of fact, while he did not learn anything with

academic thoroughness he did acquire during these ineffectual, these dabbling years, a command of his pencil that made him able to produce in black and white some very beautiful drawings. When his pencil sketch of his grandfather was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1897, its true and delicate modelling claimed the attention of critics among the rich and sumptuous designs of his later years; and the little illustration of Coleridge's "Genevieve" is pure distinction and rhythmic charm of line.

The most obvious achievements of these years, however, were gained at random in the fascinating by-paths of learning. His attendance at the Academy was irregular, and his truant hours were many of them spent in the Old Reading-room of the British Museum, "hunting up volumes of the most ancient Italian lyrists, and also volumes of modern British poets, and maybe of French as well." The poems he liked he translated. Dante, who during his childhood had been a thin literary ghost haunting his father's presence, became when he was fifteen or sixteen years old a new poet, young, and passionately human, tumultuously in love, and master of a lovely language, the friendly, eager, grave, and rapturous guide to a New Life which the boy set about interpreting as no one else has ever interpreted it. More than a dozen years later, when painting had gained the upper hand, these early translations, exquisitely perfected, were put into print, preserving the pungency and grace of

Rossetti's best time, of the most impressionable of all his impressionable years. At this time, too, he "read up all manner of old romaunts to pitch upon stunning words for poetry," showing early and with the most matter of fact nonchalance his appreciation of the value of the right vocabulary, "faithful to the colouring of his own spirit."

A modern guide, also, he now discovered, Browning, whose poems were an endless delight, and from whom he gave endless recitations. The "involved style" of the author of "Paracelsus" and "Sordello" made no especial tax on the understanding of one to whom the eccentricities of the English tongue were already familiar. He found in the poems "passion, observation, aspiration, mediævalism, the dramatic perception of character, act, and incident" that made them the very theatre of his own confident, absorbing dreams.

One more name must be added to make the trio controlling the direction of his thought before the end of his second decade. William Blake, jeering at Correggio, Titian, Rubens, and other masters of the past, and producing designs of mystical significance and profound imagination, brought "balsam to Rossetti's soul and grist to his mill." In 1847 he borrowed ten shillings of his brother to seize an opportunity for purchasing one of Blake's MS. books at the museum, and the work of the two boys in copying out the tangled poetry and prose in the precious volume was the basis of all their after

interest in Blake literature, and resulted finally, on William Rossetti's part, in the Aldine edition of Blake's work, as yet without a rival.

About this central current of inspiration Rossetti's life played somewhat wantonly. The theatre, good or bad, was a joy to him; novels, trashy and great, were "enormously admired" by him; artists of mediocre talent fixed his attention; he was fond of joking, of loud laughter, and, above all, fond of admiring, and of expressing his admiration. Thus he gravitated toward the point of departure from anything resembling conventional methods of training, until in 1848 he broke the bonds that could not hold him so lightly as to be endurable.

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CHAPTER II.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES. ENGLISH AND AMERICAN.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM has suffered from the tendency of human nature to define a thing, "in order," as someone has said, "to save the trouble of understanding it." Through various and contradictory definitions it has been held responsible for many artistic sins and also credited with an amount of virtue it hardly could claim. At once the most discerning and least didactic statement of it is given by a painter who appreciated its "dramatic program" without falling under its spell. "Pre-Raphaelitism," he says, "is the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of course." And this Brotherhood was what? Little more in reality than a band of a few enthusiastic young men—("Thank God that they *are* young," said Ruskin)—who had eager minds, interesting ideas to express, and a great determination, not by any means upheld by their technical skill, to express them. Their name, somewhat but not altogether misleading, led to an uproar against

them which their pictures would never, perhaps, have raised; this uproar, amounting to persecution, aroused the abounding sympathy of Ruskin, and his defence produced a great reaction in their favour, with the curious result that by the time the little organisation had wearied of its own existence and dissolved, it was pretty well fixed in the public mind as a revolutionary influence, a "school."

The part played by Rossetti in all this was a peculiar one. Because he had so little in common with most of his companions; because his independent genius was so little dominated, or even guided, by any hard-and-fast principles he might profess, or which might be professed for him; because his contribution to the Brotherhood was not chiefly the veracity in workmanship, the conscientiousness of detail, the morality of motive, demanded by them, but a deep vein of imaginative romance inherited or derived from the great dreamers of mediæval Italy, and a lovely sense of colour blooming with exotic brilliancy in the foggy atmosphere of London,—for these very reasons, by which he is set apart from and above the Brotherhood, he has come to be regarded as its chief exponent and representative, and, after fifty years, is still spoken of as Rossetti, the leader of the Pre-Raphaelites. His admirers can smile with perfect good-humour over the claims of Millais's filial biographer, who quotes his father's assertion, made, it must be said, with a tinge of superior virtue in the tone, that "Rossetti's art was

not Pre-Raphaelite at all—highly imaginative and original and not without elements of beauty," but "not Nature." Not nature indeed, but temperament and the supreme expression of a sentiment quite unknown in England or in any other one spot where brushes were at that time touching canvas; a sentiment belonging to two ages and two countries united in one man, and that man singularly himself and unsubordinated to influences of either lower or higher kind.

His interest in the little Brotherhood was ardent enough, however, and is easily traced. The history of the brief interval between his connection with it and his previous study in the Academy shows him beating about in unrestrained impatience to be free from the direction of others, although he was not then or later indifferent to the opinions of those about him, or disinclined to learn from them as much as he could without interfering with his own pronounced tendencies and predilections.

By the end of 1847, it was perfectly plain to him that his path in art lay in some other direction than through the successive gates of the Royal Academy. Two more years at the Antique before he could hope to enter the painting school was a prospect that appalled him. He was eager to venture on colour, but quite unequal to the hazard. "Every time I attempt to express my ideas in colour," he wrote to his Aunt Charlotte Polidori "I find myself baffled, not by want of ability—I feel this and why should I not

say it?—but by ignorance of certain apparently insignificant technicalities, which with the guidance of an experienced artist might soon be acquired." The means to this end were provided by Miss Polidori, who from her regular income as a governess was alone of all the family capable of producing "comfortable extra sums" to further the desires of her relatives. Rossetti had two men in view who "by some unaccountable accident" had not obtained public renown, but either of whom he would trust with his education as a painter. Ford Madox Brown was one, and to him he wrote the first of the series of extravagantly appreciative and sincere letters which, like milestones, marked his admirations to the end of his life.

From various causes,—ill-success in his work, domestic trouble, and poverty,—Brown's temper in his earlier years was saturnine, and there is a tradition that when he received from this unknown correspondent a rhapsody on the pictures so sadly neglected by the public, coupled with a hope that he "might possibly admit pupils to profit by his invaluable assistance," the applicant feeling convinced in that case of having "some chance in the Art," he provided himself with a stout stick and sallied forth to call on the "Gabriel C. Rossetti" who signed the letter, prepared to cudgel him for an impudent joke. Rossetti's sincerity of manner, however, literally disarmed him, and he left the house "a friend for that day in 1848, and a friend for life."

His advice to Rossetti was less radical than the latter had hoped it would be. He had himself been well equipped in several art schools for more than one branch of his profession, and rigid and long-continued attention to those insignificant technicalities which Rossetti had hoped soon to acquire seemed to him an essential of learning to paint. He recommended his pupil to do some copying, and to paint still-life ("pickle-jars") with him during the day, and in the evening to attend an academy where the students drew from the model. This advice Rossetti received with respectful gratitude and followed for a time. One of the bottle studies which he painted, obviously in a spirit of dutiful acquiescence, is owned by Mr. Bancroft of Wilmington, Delaware, and shows how closely his first steps in colour followed the path of his master. The actual hues of the red and blue bottles and the red curtain are singularly like those of Brown's *Romeo and Juliet* which hangs in the same house, though less pure and bright and wholly without glow or beauty, while a reclining figure, substituted at a later period for the anatomical horse at first forming a part of the inspiring composition, betrays, despite the attempt to subdue it to its surroundings, a liveliness and fusion of colour that are Rossetti's own and will not down.

In a few months, not having found what he sought, he was mapping out a new course that shortly led him to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He saw in the Spring Exhibition at the Royal Academy

Holman Hunt's painting, from *The Eve of St. Agnes,* and, thinking it the finest picture of the year, went up to him and boisterously told him as much. Later he called upon Hunt at his studio, and grumbled to him about the pickle-jars, and by the 20th of August, 1848, the two young men were sharing a studio together at No. 7 Cleveland Street, Rossetti at last in an atmosphere that suited him, combining still-life with figure painting in a composition of his own, at Hunt's suggestion and under his criticism.

Thirty-eight years later Hunt recalled the vivid incidents of this companionship with a care as minute as any he spent upon his early drawings. Whatever Rossetti was in after life, in those days he exercised an influence anything but depressing upon his friends. His eager mind, at once receptive and narrow, his spontaneity and expansiveness, made him a comrade of enlivening power and charm. In the Cleveland Street studio talk was as much a part of the day's program as painting. Hunt was twenty-one, Rossetti a year younger. Both had convictions upon art and opinions upon all other subjects that had swum within their ken. Though they are now thought of as having been at that time inspired by the same ideals and subject to the same predilections, their discussions indicate significant diversities. Geology and astronomy seemed to Hunt full of poetic suggestions; but, for Rossetti, "What could it matter whether the earth moved round the sun or the sun travelled about the earth!" Natural science and the

development of human progress, which forcibly appealed to Hunt, seemed to Rossetti equally uninteresting. Hunt had already attained his firm faith in chronological detail as an important element in Scriptural and historical painting. Rossetti, on the contrary, felt with most other romantic painters that taking thought for accuracy in costume and accuracy in type killed the poetic nature of the design. With Hunt, even then, design was illustration of events, a *catalogue raisonnée;* with Rossetti, then as ever after, design was, above all, the expression of emotion and thought. Both painters, however, dwelt lovingly upon the chances of a radiant future when worthy pupils were to disseminate their cherished ideas, and cause art to take its proper place in modern life. Hunt ventured to express doubt of the British public's pliability. But Rossetti confidently swept aside this idle fear: "Were there not hundreds of young aristocrats and millionaires growing up who would be only too glad to get due direction how to make the country glorious as Greece and Italy had been?" When we think of Rossetti's influence upon Morris, "setting the author of *The Earthly Paradise,*" according to Harry Quilter, "on the road to that decoration which has changed the look of half the houses in London and substituted art for ugliness all over the kingdom"; when we think of his influence on Burne-Jones, and of the rivalry with Whistler in the possession of beautiful bric-à-brac, that raised its price in every shop in

London, and made it coveted, we realise that he carried his extravagant prophecy more than a little way toward fulfilment.

In the many and long intervals of his work, Rossetti was fond of "chanting, in a voice rich and full of passion," pages upon pages of poetry, Italian or English, ancient or modern, and usually, as Browning's *Sordello*, not popular or well-known. But when he had once sat down, Hunt says, and was "immersed in the effort to express his purpose, and the difficulties had to be wrestled with, his tongue was hushed; he remained fixed and inattentive to all that went on about him; he rocked himself to and fro, and at times he moaned lowly, or hummed for a brief minute as if telling off some idea. All this while he peered intently before him, looking hungry and eager, and passing by in his regard any who came before him as if not seen at all. Then he would often get up and walk out of the room without saying a word. Years afterward when he became stout, and men with a good deal of reason found a resemblance in him to the bust of Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, and still later when he had outgrown this resemblance, it seemed to me that it was in these early days only that the soul within had been truly seen in his face. In these early days, with all his headstrongness and a certain want of consideration, his life within was untainted to an exemplary degree, and he worthily rejoiced in the poetic atmosphere of the sacred and spiritual dreams that

then encircled him, however some of his noisy demonstrations might hinder this from being recognised by a hasty judgment." That those who knew him in later years only, had also a glimpse of this spiritual beauty in his face through its many indications of different qualities, and found "the visionary gleam," the "glory and the dream" not entirely passed away from it, is most evident from Watts-Dunton's description of him as the painter D'Arcy in his novel *Aylwin*. "If it [the face of D'Arcy] was not beautiful in detail," he says, "it was illuminated by an expression that gave a unity of beauty to the whole. And what was the expression? I can only describe it by saying that it was the expression of genius; and it had that imperious magnetism which I had never before seen in any face save that of Sinfi Lovell."

The studio in which Rossetti and Hunt alternately talked and worked is described by Mr. Stephens as a dismal place, with one big eastern window giving upon a most unlovely view of monotonous heaps of damp, orange-coloured piles of timber, and with walls painted dark maroon made dingier by stains of dust and smoke. The picture with which Rossetti struggled gallantly in the gaunt large room, against the crafts and assaults of technical deficiency, was *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, "a little flat and grey and rather thin in painting," but exquisite in its charm of pure and quiet suggestion, and marvellous as the work of a boy without usual training or usual

self-control. There is no hint in its austerity of the plumb-line rigidity common to the work of students, nor are there traces of stippling smoothness or bravado of careless brushwork. In place of these we find the restraint of scholarly intuitions, chaste youthful reverence for delicate and dreamy sentiment, and firm if not robust modelling. The whole picture suggests what Mr. LaFarge has called "respectful methods—the methods of religious life," and the symbolism with which it is charged indicates the esoteric, the mystical mind already at work beneath the young man's careless, defiant, blustering exterior. The figures are those of Mary for which Christina sat, St. Anna, which was a faithful portrait of Rossetti's mother, and St. Joachim, painted from a man employed in the Rossetti family to black boots and do other such odds and ends of service.

The accessories are a three-flowered lily, tended by a quaint, ascetic young angel; six large volumes on the floor, inscribed with the names of the cardinal virtues; by Mary's side some long sharp thorns, emblematical of the future passion; a vine trained by Joachim into the pattern of a cross, a dove surrounded by a gilded halo, a lamp of antique shape, a vase holding a rose, and a glimpse of Galilean landscape. For the frame, Rossetti had printed a slip of gold paper with two sonnets explanatory of the picture: the one beginning, "This is that Blessed Mary pre-elect," and the other, "These are the symbols; on that cloth of red I' the centre is the Tripoint."

It is interesting to find Rossetti thus at the very beginning, with his first exhibited picture, planning for it a frame that should be harmonious with it, and a sonnet that should explain it, as he did fifteen years later for *The Lady Lilith,* and *Venus Verticordia,* and twenty years later for *Penelope,* and nearly thirty years later for *Astarte Syriaca.* It was this habit of his that gave rise to Whistler's story of finding him once quite eager over a projected picture with which some weeks later he was progressing "finely,"—the frame having been made for the still blank canvas. Later still, while the canvas was yet pristine, all was reported as going well, the sonnet having been written. Whistler's suggestion at this point was that the sonnet should be put in the frame, and the work considered over.

To get sufficient command over himself and his instruments for this so nearly adequate expression of his idea demanded from Rossetti an effort that shows him characteristically as strong in will as many events of his life show him weak. "It is the more to his honour," Mr. Stephens says, that "while his facility in verse was rare, brilliant, and great, he had at this period to undergo agonies of toil, and passionately, so to say, to tear himself to pieces while he became a painter according to the lofty standards of Madox Brown, Holman Hunt, and John Millais. These, as well as other friends of his, witnessed the greatness of the struggle and honoured accordingly the victor of that strenuous

self-contest." It was a contest he was destined to repeat in many fields to the end of his life.

While painting *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin,* Rossetti saw much of Millais, whom he had met before at the Royal Academy and in the little Cyclographic Society, and the triple friendship on which the Brotherhood rested began. Millais was the type, well-known to art-schools, of "prize" student. A year younger than Rossetti, he was already hung with medals, and an exhibitor of some importance. He was intimate with Hunt, who saw in him "a generous, quick enthusiasm" and a spirit on fire with eagerness to seize whatever he saw to be good. Although he liked Rossetti at first, the two were as fitted to mingle as oil and water, and Millais records in later years that "D. G. Rossetti was a queer fellow, and impossible as a boon companion—so dogmatic and so irritable when opposed."

Millais and Hunt had already made a compact "to adopt a style of absolute independence as to art-dogma and convention." When Rossetti heard of it he became an easy and enthusiastic convert, and suggested the idea of a Brotherhood. Thomas Woolner, the sculptor; James Collinson, a painter, and pronounced by Rossetti "a stunner," on the strength of one interesting picture; Frederic George Stephens, an art critic, and apparently the only one of the number who had much acquaintance with the actual pre-Raphaelite art, and William Rossetti were enrolled as members. At Millais's house in

Gower Street they were shown what Ruskin calls Lasinio's "execrable engravings" from the frescos of Gozzoli, Orcagna, and others in the Campo Santo at Pisa, as examples of the sort of art-spirit with which they should sympathise, and the crusade of the P.-R.B.'s began.

Their code, as Mr. William Rossetti records it, was simple and inoffensive enough. They were: (1) to have genuine ideas to express; (2) to study nature attentively, so as to know how to express them; (3) to sympathise with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parading and learned by rote; (4) most indispensable of all, they were to produce thoroughly good pictures and statues.

They held monthly meetings and daily meetings, for that matter, to discuss questions of art and literature, and, as far as can be discovered, bore themselves with self-respect. Their habits, together and separately, were those of wholesome, well-bred, serious-minded young men. Millais's biographer calls attention to the fact that at a period when, as Thackeray has shown us, "all Bohemia was saturated with tobacco, spirits, and quaint oaths," the Brotherhood neither smoked, drank, nor swore. None of the prejudice with which they were presently to be regarded could be laid therefore to any waywardness or wantonness of character.

Nor was their chosen principle of naturalism entirely new or entirely without honour in England.

William Dyce, whose sympathy with the early Florentines had attracted the attention of Overbeck as early as 1828, was made full member of the Royal Academy in 1848, and his work for the school of design at Somerset House had already called forth a commonplace but earnest argument in the *Quarterly Review* in favour of precisely that attention to reality and acquaintance with facts so ardently advocated by the Brotherhood. "Painting," said the writer, "no less than poetry is the child of Nature, and the fresher it comes from her hand the purer will be its productions." Followers of the "true school from which alone a national style can originate" must feel assured that every lane and hedgerow and cornfield is rich with purer models than art has ever produced, and that there, if they take the eye of Raphael with them, even Raphael may be surpassed." And as early as 1843, Ruskin had besought the young artists of England to "go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing," advice which no young artist was ever quite so mad as literally to follow, but which Ruskin assumed had been followed "to the letter" by the Brotherhood, when his attention was called to them in the midst of their difficulties.

The fact that the paintings exhibited by Rossetti, Millais, and Hunt in 1849, were tolerably well

received, shows also that the three painters were not outraging any accepted canons of taste by revolutionary treatment. In May, Rossetti wrote to his aunt that his picture that year *(The Girlhood of Mary Virgin)* had created some interest, and that the *Athenæum* and the *Builder* approved it, as the *Art Journal* did later.

The trouble that befell the Brotherhood seems really to have started when they made of each other Sairey Gamp's demand: "Give it a name, I beg!" The name chosen was a marvel of infelicity, so far as its effect upon the public was concerned. The idol of English art circles at that time was Raphael. His suave manner had begotten endless imitation, and he had long been made to stand sponsor to a smooth style easily acquired, and wholly, of course, innocent of his radiant serenity. According to Ruskin, the typical art student was taught that Nature was full of faults, but that Raphael was perfection; that the more he copied Raphael the better, and that after much copying of Raphael he should try what he could do himself in a Raphaelesque but yet original manner. A Pre-Raphaelite, then, must be the same as an Anti-Raphaelite: to go back of the master for ideals could be nothing less than denial of the master; moreover, before Raphael was Mediævalism, and the revival of Mediævalism in England was just then taking the objectionable form of Puseyism. Consequently a "Pre-Raphaelite" who painted religious pictures with somewhat archaic simplicity,

and belonged to a Brotherhood, was probably a Puseyite and a danger to be reckoned with.

Therefore, after the public for two years in succession had seen in its exhibitions pictures bearing the initials P.-R. B., and had learned, through some sad garrulity of Rossetti's own, what the mysterious letters stood for, the dogs of war were let loose and bayed for a time unceasingly.

"That two youths of the respective ages of eighteen and twenty," wrote Ruskin in 1851, "should have conceived for themselves a totally independent and sincere method of study, and enthusiastically persevered in it against every kind of dissuasion and opposition, is strange enough; that in the third or fourth year of their efforts they should have produced works in many parts not inferior to the best of Albert Dürer, this is perhaps not less strange. But the loudness and universality of the howl which the common critics of the press have raised against them, the utter absence of all generous help or encouragement from those who can both measure their toil and appreciate their success, and the shrill, shallow laughter of those who can do neither the one nor the other,—these are the strangest of all —unimaginable unless they had been experienced."

Charles Dickens was among their more vehement assailants. In *Household Words* he warned his readers of the corruptness of the new school with a manifest ignorance and solemn presumption worthy of his own immortal Pecksniff.

"You come into the Royal Academy Exhibition," he says, "which is familiar with the works of Wilkie, Etty, Collins, Mulready, Eastlake, Leslie, Maclise — to the contemplation of a Holy Family. You will have the goodness to discharge from your minds all post-Raphael ideas, all religious aspirations, all elevating thoughts, all tender, awful, sorrowful, ennobling, sacred, graceful, and beautiful associations, and to prepare yourself as befits such a subject — pre-Raphaelly considered — for the lowest depths of what is mean, odious, repulsive, and revolting."

These mean, odious, repulsive, and revolting compositions were *The Christian Missionary* by Hunt, and *The Boy Christ in the Carpenter's Shop* by Millais, the latter a naive and tenderly wrought conception of the poignant text:

"And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

In the "Free Gallery" of Portland Place, a gallery in which the exhibitors paid for wall-space, and the public paid for admission, hung at the same time the only less reviled *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (later called *The Annunciation*) by Rossetti, of which Mr. George Moore wrote a few years ago:

"Here at least there is drama, and the highest form of drama — spiritual drama: here, at least, there is story, and the highest form of story — symbol and

suggestion. Rossetti has revealed the essence of this intensely human story—a story that, whenever we look below the surface which is mediæval and religious, we recognise as a story of to-day, of yesterday, of all time." Painted on an oil panel 28½ x 17 inches, the white effect of the little Virgin crouching on her bed, confronted by the tall white-robed angel with his lily, is daringly broken by the deep blue of the bed-curtains, the girl's reddish hair, and the red screen in the foreground. The lovely eyes of the Virgin, "dawn-tinted eyes," Mr. Moore calls them, "filled with ache, dream, and expectation," are the dominant charm of the simple subject, so technically amiss, and so right in sentiment. This picture, hanging now in the National Gallery beside the great masterpieces of the past, in merit "far below them, of course, but not afraid of them,"[1] was described by the *Athenæum* as "an unintelligent imitation of the mere technicalities of old art—golden glories, fanciful scribblings on the frames, and other infantine absurdities," the writer admitting only that "a certain expression in the eyes of the ill-drawn face of the Virgin affords a gleam of something high in intention, but it is still not the true inspiration." It is small wonder that Rossetti abandoned precipitately his idea of a third picture for the Virgin series, deciding that the class of pictures which "had his natural preference" was "not for the market." But it is indicative of a certain sturdy honesty of attitude

[1] John LaFarge.

toward criticism which too often has been denied him, that when his brother was permitted by the *Spectator* to publish in that paper, in 1851, an article on Pre-Raphaelitism, he begged him not to attempt to defend his mediævalisms, "which *were* absurd, but rather say that there was enough good in the works to give assurance that these were merely superficial."

Like other painters of great emotional force, he was disinclined to sentimentalise over his work, and referred cheerfully to this finest example of his early style as "the blessed white eyesore" and "blessed white daub." In painting on it he had shown himself free from the hard-and-fast principle falsely attributed to the Pre-Raphaelites,—the obligation, that is, to paint only from the model, "rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing." "Yesterday," he records in one of his familiar letters, "after giving up the angel's head as a bad job (owing to William's malevolent expression), I took to working it up out of my own intelligence, and got it better by a great deal than it has yet been. I have put a gilt saucer behind his head—which crowns the China-ese character of the picture." In the main, like the rest of the Pre-Raphaelites, he went to nature for his facts, and when nature failed him, he trusted always to his "own intelligence" and copied no one.

Before the *Ecce Ancilla Domini* was sold, Ruskin had heard through Coventry Patmore that a group of young artists were being persecuted, had examined

the case, marshalled his arguments, called up all his powers of rhetoric, and through a series of letters to the *Times* defended the Pre-Raphaelites, explained them, expressed them, and finally committed them to a set of principles much more pronounced than those originally held by them. This championship following violent assault was precisely what was needed to fix the name and significance of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in a more formal and permanent shape than even its members had dreamed of. It also crystallised the error by which, after fifty years and numerous refutations, Ruskin is still held responsible not merely for the defence of the Brotherhood but for its formation. Whatever connection he had with this must consist merely of the unrecorded influence of his first volume of *Modern Painters* upon Holman Hunt, the only Brother who took the trouble to read it.

The very year that was marked by the denunciations hurled from Denmark Hill against the enemies of the Brotherhood was marked also by its dissolution. By the end of 1850, the regular meetings had died out. In 1851, Collinson withdrew in deference to his Romanist preoccupations, and Walter Howell Deverell was nominated and elected in his place ; the validity of the election was questioned, there was a flurry of discussion, an important meeting, a set of new and stringent rules,—and immediately the organisation collapsed like the boyish affair it was. There were no more meetings, there was no more

activity. "I fancy," writes Mr. William Rossetti, "that Mr. Stephens and myself [the two members who were not artists] were the two members who most sincerely regretted this disruption."

In the present day, the most tangible reminder of the Pre-Raphaelite tempest is found in the large prices commanded by the paintings of the Brothers in their P.-R. B. period, and even by the reprints of their especial mouthpiece, the magazine called *The Germ,* the original numbers of which sold in 1850 for a shilling apiece, in 1896 at seven pounds, and in 1898 at twelve guineas for the set of four numbers. A limited edition reprinted in America recently brought from twelve to fifteen dollars a copy for the last few copies, the first selling at six dollars.

The "blessed white daub," for which Rossetti in 1850 asked fifty pounds, was sold to the nation in 1886 for eight hundred pounds—all of which proves Rossetti a prophet as well as a painter, as in 1868 he wrote to Madox Brown :

"The epoch of Pre-Raphaelitism was a short one which is quite over and its products will be exceptionally valuable one day, but not yet." The artistic value of Pre-Raphaelitism in relation to the art of England is not so easily determined. As M. Mérimée pointed out, these combatants for realism had nothing much to fight, no "academy" in the French sense, no artistic traditions, nothing but a style of colouring fashionable in the studios, "une méthode de barbouillage." They were chiefly praised, as they were

chiefly blamed, by an ethical and literary standard, by the English standard as it then existed. Nor can we place entirely to their credit the fact that this standard no longer exists there, or to speak more truly, that two standards now exist there, by which pictures are judged—the intellectual, and the artistic. Yet one thing is certain, —and Rossetti was not more responsible for it than Millais and Hunt and Ruskin,— Pre-Raphaelitism stirred the English art-world to its depths by making it inquire where before it had accepted; by making it doubt where before it had worshipped; by making it for an interval at least look with its own eyes at problems of design and colour which before it had ignored, and which afterward it considered almost as defining a mission. Certainly, as Mr. Russell Sturgis has said on more than one occasion, "the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and the profound instinct which first was seen strongly in the Pre-Raphaelites have made the English school what it is."

The connection between the English Pre-Raphaelites and the writers and painters sometimes called by that name in America is very slight, but perfectly distinct, and forms an interesting phase of our own rather complex national expression.

A people more positively moral than artistic or intellectual or emotional, it was natural that we should take kindly to an art with an ethical creed, and respond promptly to the strenuous appeal made by Mr. Ruskin for sincerity of method and elevation

of subject. By his chart chiefly we sailed our toy boat of Pre-Raphaelitism. The message reached us first, apparently, through Mr. William J. Stillman, who, having studied painting under F. E. Church for a year without hope, stimulated by *Modern Painters* set sail for England in 1850 to see pictures and find a guide he could trust. He made the acquaintance of Ruskin; an acquaintance fatal, he now reflects, to the career of a painter whose head had already "gone far beyond" his technical attainment. He visited the exhibitions of that significant year, of course, in which Millais and Rossetti were represented, gaining the impression that "if ever English figure-painting rose out of mediocrity, it would be through the work of the P.-R. B.," and he returned to America with a fermentation of art ideas in his brain, "in which," he says, "the influence of Turner, Pyne, the teachings of Wehnert, and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites mingled with the influence of Ruskin, and especially the preconception of art-work derived from the descriptions, often strangely misleading, of the *Modern Painters*."

One of the results of this fermentation was *The Crayon*, "A Journal devoted to the Graphic Arts and the literature related to them," founded in 1855 by Mr. Stillman and J. Durand. A variety of opinions, ranging from those of Rembrandt Peale and Daniel Huntington to those of William Rossetti and Ruskin, found expression in its columns, but the weight of its influence was thrown on the side of the

painters who rebelled against classicism and academic theories. The motto on its title-page was this ominous sentence from *Modern Painters:*

"Whence, in fine, looking to the whole kingdom of organic nature we find that our full receiving of its beauty depends first on the sensibility and then on the accuracy and touchstone faithfulness of the heart in its moral judgments."

In the editorials, also, the spirit of the editor, "the Ruskinian Apostle," the "American Pre-Raphaelite," as he was called, is not to be mistaken. "The true method of study," he earnestly dictates, "is to take small portions of scenes, and there to explore perfectly, and with the most insatiable curiosity, every object presented, and to define them with the carefulness of a topographer. We must learn to *see* as well as to draw, for in our careless way of regarding Nature, we see as weakly as though *it* were only sketched instead of being finished. To make a single study of a portion of a landscape in this way, is more worth than a summer's sketching." It is not strange that a young man holding these doctrines with much the reverence his Puritan ancestors had for the teachings of St. Paul, should have applied them to his own work regardful of the letter that killeth. In his recently printed reminiscences he tells us that he spent the daylight hours of every day for three months on a twenty-five by thirty inch study of a wood scene with a violet in the foreground. "It was not art," he adds, "but the public

did not know this any more than I did, and I was admitted to a place which I believe was one of the highest among my contemporaries at home, in a way that led to little even in its complete success."

Before *The Crayon* died out in 1861, the influence sown by its Pre-Raphaelite contributors had spread and was ready to bear fruit. In 1860 Thomas C. Farrer, a young Englishman who had learned to draw in the free night school which Ruskin carried on in London with the help of Rossetti, Woolner, and one or two others, came to America filled with his master's enthusiasm. He found to his surprise "a few sympathisers with the views he had imbibed in the Ruskin school to give him a cordial welcome." He even found a few artists and architects who had long sought to emancipate themselves from the conventionality of the prevailing school. At the end of a couple of years of friendly intercourse and ardent discussion these young men organised themselves in the "Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art." It was the child of the P.-R. B. S. The final clause of its declaration of purposes read :

"We hold that the revival of Art in our own time, of which the principal manifestations have been in England, is full of promise for the future and consolation for the present. That the Pre-Raphaelite school is founded on principles of eternal truth. That the efforts for the restoration of the so-called Gothic Art have been, in the main, well directed. That the hope for true Art in the future is in

the complete and permanent success of this great reformation."

Of course an "organ" was needed, and there was promptly established a fervid little magazine entitled *The New Path*. Its mission was to "summon the young to enter into the earnest, loving study of God's work of nature." "The artists of America," the opening paper announces, "are nearly all young men; they are not hampered by too many traditions, and they enjoy the almost inestimable advantage of having no past, no masters, and no schools. Add that they work for an unsophisticated, and, so far as Art is concerned, uneducated public, which, whatever else may stand in the way, will not be prevented by any prejudice or preconceived notions from accepting any really good work which may be set before it. These are solid advantages, hardly possessed in such a degree by any other society, and make a good foundation on which to build well and beautifully for the future."

The "unhampered young artists" believed in the union of the arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting, and *The New Path* contained a great deal of information and some by no means unworthy criticism in these different directions. One of the members of the Association was P. B. Wight, the architect of the National Academy of Design building at Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue, now, alas, abandoned and awaiting destruction. This building was designed in an essentially Pre-Raphaelite

spirit. "The painters, sculptors, and architects," Mr. Wight says, "were actuated by a common antipathy to everything that was meretricious, conventional, and false," and the result was an individual and lovely work, with many defects but with peculiarly endearing merits. One departure from conventional methods was the realistic stone carving in the manner of old Gothic ornament. The workmen had to be trained to this, at first working from clay models, then learning to study natural forms and express them with spirit; finding great enjoyment in the work and hunting out motives for themselves in field and garden plants. Considering the difficulties, these carved ornaments are remarkably good. They belong, of course, to what is called imitative art, and might easily have been surpassed in beauty by good copies of conventional designs. The charm they have lies chiefly in the unmistakable sincerity of the method, the hall-mark of true Pre-Raphaelitism. The lilies and bulrushes of the spandrels on the staircase of the Academy are neither botanically accurate nor agreeably composed, but they show a simple devotion and a genuine preoccupation with the natural model that covers their lack of "style" in the higher sense of that much-misused word.

Other details were made equally true to the principle of "Truth in Art." The iron railing, for example, was made of wrought-iron rods, ornamented with leaves cut from thin sheet iron and connected with the body of the railing by slender stems of

wrought iron. The little drinking-fountain with its beautiful marble basin is architectural in treatment and seems in place as a part of the building, and the mosaic of the pavement in the vestibule is a charming, if little-appreciated, combination of yellow, purple, and grey marbles. The comment at the end of a careful description of the then new structure, in *The New Path*, reads sadly in the light of its approaching demolition :

"This solidly and admirably built, richly decorated building, a noble design well carried out, will remain for ages unless fire destroy it ; its lesson ought not to be lost upon this generation, it will not be lost on the next," said the writer, who knew not his America.[1]

It is not easy to trace the exact influence of the artists who laboured with such intense and joyous earnestness for the advancement of what they believed was in very deed truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in Art. There were three of them whose work has at least found its way into private collections, where it is cherished with constant and affectionate delight,—Farrer, above mentioned, John W. Hill, and his son, John Henry Hill.

Farrer was the leader in the Association. His was the self-conscious not the self-abnegating, the personal not the religious, temperament. He was at

[1] In speaking thus of the Academy as a Pre-Raphaelite building, I have not meant to connect it directly with the Pre-Raphaelite movement in America except as it was inspired by their ideals, and the outcome of study along the lines approved by Ruskin. When Mr. Wight was in college he came under the influence of Ruskin's

one with his subject, in love with its effect on his emotions as well as with its external aspect, absorbed in the psychologic value of a limited and relatively simple scene. A dead bluebird on the snow, a swallow's flight across the pale purple evening, a single hill-crown against a sunset of flaming yellow, glow with the intimation of truth beyond the fact. With this poetic sensitiveness went a power for minute drawing of detail quite unequalled. A patch of weeds and grass and tiny wild flowers a few inches square became under his pencil such a revelation of complex and delicate beauty as, literally, only the lens discloses to the ordinary eye. Here too, however, there was the suggestion of individual feeling, the imaginative touch. Later, when Farrer had returned to England, his methods changed completely, but he never lost the marvellous accuracy of eye and hand in whatever he chose to render.

The work of the elder Hill was marked by a strong predilection for the happier moods of nature. His sunny fields were green with the luxuriant growth of fortunate summers. His skies were of the bluest. His flowers, of which he painted many in many kinds, were perfect and were invariably studied in the outdoor light. He abhorred the studio and its aids and it is almost literally true that, save for some rare copying, he never worked beneath

writings and "then began to admire Italian Gothic," he says. The Academy has so often been called a copy of the Palace of the Doges that it is interesting to learn from its originator that its details were all, except the carving, which was *sui generis*, "studied from Florentine and Veronese originals, and not from Venetian models."

a roof. He even eschewed the favouring level light of the afternoon, preferring the flooding radiance of the full day. But he was saved from the worst trials of these conditions by his attention to specific rather than general effects and his frank insensitiveness to mystery. Those who remember him will not easily dissociate his gentle, sincere, happy work from the qualities of his own nature, singularly simple and lovely and gracious as it was.

John Henry Hill painted in much the same spirit, with a less literal interest in the phenomena of nature and a more personal effort toward expression. One of his pictures criticised in *The New Path* was condemned for its "broad flat touches nearly half an inch long (!) in dead flat colour." His colour, however, comes near to representing in our little history of unimpressive art the phase represented in the great movement of French art by the brilliant impersonal style of Monet. His shadows are as unbefogged as those of the Frenchman, and his half-tones are blithe with unmixed yellows, blues, and reds. Even the idol of his most profound worship, Turner, could not wheedle him into acquiescence with the black moods of his *Calais Pier* or *The Shipwreck,* while the colour of *The Old Temeraire* seemed to him when he first saw it perfectly natural and "all that he could wish."

One of the fillips given by *The New Path* to America's interest in art was in the direction of house decoration. We had no William Morris to

carry out in practical production the æsthetic plans of the new school; but it was something to have the plans before the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1870 changed our ideas so completely. The ground was at least prepared for seed. Clarence Cook was the principal writer on household art, and in his articles of nearly forty years ago are found many of the principles governing the best type of house decoration practised to-day. A vigorous protest was made against the Wilton carpets of florid design, the crimson hangings, the gilded wall-papers, the "elegant drawing-room tables, their legs studied from the hinder-legs of dogs," the bedsteads with enormous head-boards towering "in ticklish height above the pillows, five feet wide and about as high, and nowhere more than an inch and a quarter thick," which constituted in 1860 the ideal furnishings of a more or less costly home. A corresponding plea was made for hardwood floors and rugs, for the pleasant and plain design of the ironing table, "a box below, a seat upon the box, the table-top tipped upright forming a back to the seat," for tapestry hangings, for the graceful shapes of Venetian glass, and for many another detail of decoration since become accepted as a mark of cultivated taste.

Thus in America as in England the name Pre-Raphaelitism stood for sincere methods and personal ideas, and the Pre-Raphaelites were the "men of progress" in their respective countries.

CHAPTER III.

THE GERM.

NOT many months after the organisation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the desire came into Dante Rossetti's mind to establish a magazine in which he and the other six Brothers, as well as outside sympathisers, might present their ideas to the public. None of his companions appear to have been on fire with this ambition, but Rossetti was not to be denied and "with varying degrees of reluctance his friends yielded." In July, 1849, the project was under vigorous discussion. On the thirteenth it was to be a sixpenny monthly, for which four or five would write and one make an etching, each subscribing a guinea, thus becoming a proprietor. On the fifteenth it was changed to a forty-page affair with two etchings, and was to be sold for a shilling a number. The first name suggested for it was *Monthly Thoughts in Literature and Art*. This was changed to *Thoughts towards Nature* at Dante Rossetti's instigation. Presently the peculiar title *The Germ* was chosen from many others implying

varying degrees of hopefulness as to its mission in the world, among them *The Precursor, The Advent, The Illuminator, The Die, The Chariot, The Goad, The Acorn, The Alert, The Spur.* The full title was finally *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature, and Art.* Two numbers appeared under this title, the result of earnest collaboration among the Brothers, and the next two numbers were given the more commonplace designation *Art and Poetry: Thoughts towards Nature,* a change of which Rossetti was the chief advocate, his business sense rebelling against undue eccentricity, as we see from his discussion of the preposition "towards" in the subtitle. "I think 'towards' is much the better," he wrote to his brother, "'toward' being altogether between you, me, and Tennyson: and it is well to seem as little affected as possible."

The original name, *The Germ,* suffered what the philologists call a "sound shift" from the soft to the hard "g," some outsider, ignorant of a word not so much in use then as now, having pronounced it "Gurm," a pronunciation gleefully adopted by the reverend Brotherhood, and since seriously used against them as typical of the "affectation" they wished to avoid.

Amid the preliminary bustle of planning and issuing *The Germ,* Rossetti went with Holman Hunt on a trip to Paris and Belgium, the three or four weeks of his stay constituting the longest Continental visit he ever made. The impression it produced upon

him cannot be called in any marked degree important to his art, and his letters have in them more references to what is going on at home than to his own experiences. In one of the numerous sonnets written on the journey he indicates with less exaggeration than might be supposed the attitude of the two young travellers toward the treasures of the Louvre :

> Meanwhile Hunt and myself race at full speed
> Along the Louvre, and yawn from school to school,
> Wishing worn-out those masters known as old.
> And no man asks of Browning ; though indeed
> (As the book travels with me) any fool
> Who would might hear Sordello's story told.

His first "race" through the gallery revealed to him, however, "a most wonderful copy of a fresco by Angelico, a tremendous Van Eyck, some mighty things by that real stunner Lionardo, some ineffably poetical Mantegnas (as different as day from night from what we have in England), several wonderful Early Christians whom nobody ever heard of, some tremendous portraits by some Venetian whose name I forget, and a stunning *Francis I.* by Titian." A few days later he wrote : "There are very few good things at the Louvre besides what I mentioned in my last. There is a wonderful head by Raphael, however : another wonderful head by I know not whom: and a pastoral—at least a kind of pastoral—by Giorgione, which is so intensely fine that I condescended to sit down before it and write a sonnet."

At frequent stages of his sight-seeing he thus

condescended, and *The Germ* was the richer for his experience by six "Sonnets for Pictures," *The Carillon* (verses on the fantastic chimes of Antwerp and Bruges), and the remarkable *Pax Vobis* (later called *World's Worth*), which won for him the praise of a Catholic writer who compared it to "a thought from A Kempis elaborated into verse," besides the poem which in *The Germ* is called *From the Cliffs*, and in its later and extended form, *Sea Limits*. In certain respects this poem is as beautiful as any written by him, and has in full measure the quality so rare with him of a Wordsworthian outlook upon nature, a blending of imagination with the tranquil contemplation of natural objects. Like most of these early poems it was composed in haste and on the inspiration of the moment. It was slightly changed before its appearance in *The Germ* and greatly changed in the final form, how much for the better may be seen from a comparison of the two versions of the first stanza :

FROM THE CLIFFS : NOON.

The sea is in its listless chime :
  Like Time's lapse rendered audible;
  The murmur of the earth's large shell.
In a sad blueness beyond rhyme
  It ends : Sense, without Thought, can pass
  No stadium further. Since Time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of Time.

THE SEA LIMITS.

Consider the sea's listless chime :
  Time's self it is, made audible,—

The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end : our sight may pass
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

A letter to James Collinson sent from Bruges shows Rossetti's enthusiasm for that "stunning" town to be dependent chiefly upon the beautiful architecture, the absence of Rubens, and the presence of Memling. The latter he at once worshipped. "His greatest production," he writes, "is a large tryptich in the hospital of St. John representing in its three compartments : firstly, *The Decollation of St. John Baptist ;* secondly, *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine to the Infant Saviour ;* and thirdly, *The Vision of St. John Evangelist in Patmos.* I shall not attempt any description ; I assure you that the perfection of character and even drawing, the astounding finish, the glory of colour, and above all the pure religious sentiment and ecstatic poetry of these works, is not to be conceived or described. Even in seeing them, the mind is at first bewildered by such Godlike completeness ; and only after some while has elapsed can at all analyse the causes of its awe and admiration ; and then finds these feelings so much increased by analysis that the last impression left is mainly one of utter shame at its own inferiority." Decidedly to Memling belongs the honour of having been the early painter with whom the independent Rossetti felt most affinity. He brings into *The Carillon* a touch of the personal feeling

toward him and his companion, Van Eyck, which a "follower" has for his "master."

> John Memmeling and John Van Eÿck
> Hold state at Bruges. In sore shame
> I scanned the works that keep their name.
> The carillon which then did strike
> Mine ears, was heard of theirs alike :
> It set me closer unto them.

The first number of *The Germ* was published on or about January 1, 1850. On the front of the cover appeared a sonnet by William Rossetti written in a spirit conciliatory to critics : on the back was a prospectus embodying a creed, and announcing that the periodical would consist "of original Poems, Stories to develop thought and principle, Essays concerning Art and other subjects, and analytic Reviews of current Literature—particularly of Poetry"; and that throughout the writings on art the endeavour would be "to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature : and also to direct attention, as an auxiliary medium, to the comparatively few works which Art has yet produced in this spirit."

The youth of most of the contributors is perhaps indicated in the dejection characterising the poetry chosen for this number, four of the nine poems having death for their subject.

They strike, however, the true note of poetry. The magazine opens with Thomas Woolner's *My Beautiful Lady*, followed by the supplementary *Of My Lady in Death*, each of which unites to

lovely cadences the element of deep emotion delicately regulated and restrained by the "severely simple art" of their author, the "sculpturesque" art which to Coventry Patmore seemed his defect. Two stanzas from the second poem will serve to show the true Pre-Raphaelite method in writing, the same method which, applied to painting, impelled Millais to surround his dead Ophelia with banks of surpassingly realistic flowers and grasses:

About her window, at the dawn,
  From the vine's crooked boughs
  Birds chirruped an arouse:
Flies, buzzing, strengthened with the morn;—
  She 'll not hear them again
  At random strike the pane:
No more upon the close-cut lawn,
  Her garment's sun-white hem
  Bend the prim daisy's stem,
In walking forth to see what flowers are born.

No more she 'll watch the dark-green rings
  Stained quaintly on the lea,
  To image fairy glee;
While thro' dry grass a faint breeze sings,
  And swarms of insects revel
  Along the sultry level:—
No more will watch their brilliant wings,
  Now lightly dip, now soar,
  Then sink, and rise once more.
My lady's death makes dear these trivial things.

After these poems (the two comprising fifty stanzas), follow a sonnet on *The Love of Beauty,* by Ford Madox Brown; a long, dull paper on *The Subject in Art,* by John Lucas Tupper; a graceful

little poem called *The Seasons*, by Coventry Patmore (the gaining of which had seemed to Rossetti a bit of unparalleled good fortune); *Dreamland*, by Christina Rossetti; *My Sister's Sleep*, by Dante Gabriel; the prose story, *Hand and Soul*, by Dante Gabriel; a thirteen-page review of Arthur Hugh Clough's *The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich*, by William Rossetti; a sonnet, *Her First Season*, by William Rossetti; a poem called *A Sketch from Nature* by John Lucas Tupper; and the gloomy little verses, *An End*, by Christina Rossetti.

To a student of Rossetti the most important contribution to this number of *The Germ* is *Hand and Soul*, written at white heat, its author sitting up the whole of a December night to finish it in time. It is the only narrative in prose that he ever did finish and contains the promise of an unusual style, a diction as pure and limpid and direct as that of Hawthorne, though far more personal. In substance it is the chronicle of the psychological life of a supposed Italian painter of the thirteenth century, Chiaro dell' Erma by name; of his desire for fame, and subsequent contempt for what he found to be so easily gained; of his rather ignoble revival at the prospect of being surpassed by a more faithful worker; of his conversion to subjects of moral greatness at which men cared little to look; and of his ultimate model appearing to him in the shape of his own soul embodied in the person of a beautiful woman, who chides him while she comforts, and whose

portrait he paints with jealous truth that his soul may stand before him always and perplex him no more. The Epilogue describes this portrait as hanging in the Pitti Gallery of Florence, and gives particulars concerning it with an air of such good faith that more than one Passionate Pilgrim has sought there for it in vain.

Notwithstanding the somewhat boyish and morbid tone of *Hand and Soul*, the little tale is rich in thoughts and suggestions that are not boyish certainly, and that show Rossetti on intimate terms with conscience. It was not boyish, for example, nor was it in accordance with the influences of his youth, to read presumption in the efforts of men to teach godliness.

"How is it that thou, a man," Chiaro's soul says to him, "wouldst say coldly to the mind what God hath said to the heart warmly? Thy will was honest and wholesome; but look well lest this also be folly, . . . to say, 'I, in doing this, do strengthen God among men.' When at any time hath he cried unto thee, saying, 'My son, lend me thy shoulder, for I fall'? Deemest thou the men who enter God's temple in malice, to the provoking of blood, and neither for his love nor for his wrath will abate their purpose, . . . shall afterwards stand with thee in the porch, midway between Him and themselves, to give ear unto thy thin voice, which merely the fall of their visors can drown, and to see thy hands, stretched feebly, tremble among

their swords? Give thou to God no more than he asketh of thee: but to man also, that which is man's. In all that thou doest work from thine own heart, simply; for his heart is as thine, when thine is wise and humble; and he shall have understanding of thee."

While *Hand and Soul* is the only complete prose work by Rossetti, a fragment remains of a story called *St. Agnes of the Intercession*, begun at about the same time, which shows even more clearly the preoccupation of the young writer with unprosaic thoughts. It is written in a plainer narrative style, but has for its theme the more fantastic history of an English painter, convinced that his soul has lived in this world prior to his birth, and finding in confirmation of this belief two portraits in a Florentine gallery resembling in minute detail his betrothed and himself.

"That it was my portrait,—that the St. Agnes was the portrait of Mary,—and that both had been painted by myself four hundred years ago,—this now rose up distinctly before me as the one and only solution of so startling a mystery, and as being, in fact, that result round which, or some portion of which, my soul had been blindly hovering, uncertain of itself."

Here we find the legendary idea later repeated in the picture *How They Met Themselves*, for which the first design was drawn in 1851. *St. Agnes of the Intercession* was intended for the fifth number of

The Germ, but the number never appeared and the story was never finished, although in 1882 Rossetti, with his curious clinging to the inventions of his past, had the manuscript sent down to Birchington that he might complete it.

In the second number of the magazine came *The Blessed Damozel*, the first version of which was written in 1846 or 1847, and in which, as in the *Ecce Ancilla Domini*, we touch Rossetti's mind at a period when his mystical and his earthly tendencies were nearest together. Later, when he saw more fully the sumptuous beauty of the physical and natural world; when his colour grew heavier with rich and splendid hues, when his forms had ripened into more opulent loveliness, when his words were chosen with a more instructed sense of emotional meaning, something had fallen from his style both in writing and in painting, some fine cloak of youthful aspiration toward the higher interpretation of feeling and thought, and of hesitation in grasping the vulgar truths within reach of the common hand. Only for two or three years had he both dispositions equally, the years of his assumed Pre-Raphaelitism, when his genius, hardly unfolded from the sheath was enchanting, and never more so than in *The Blessed Damozel*, the unmatched delicacy and tenderness of which surpass the most inspired love-poems of Tennyson or Keats.

Poe's *Raven*, according to Mr. Caine, was the father of this poem, Rossetti having felt that Poe had done

the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover upon earth, and determining to reverse the conditions and give expression to the grief of the one in heaven. The son of a free-thinking father and a mother who was a devout member of the Church of England, Rossetti himself was not given to religious observance and was certainly not a Romanist in creed or habit, but his delight in the Christian symbol elaborated in colour and form and harmonious with the most poignant moods of the soul, was an inalienable part of his mental equipment. His imagery was such as to appeal to a devout imagination under the poetic guidance of the Church. His earliest prepossessions linked his visions of an unknown world to the visible signs familiar to incense-laden sanctuaries, and one of his latest impulses turned him toward the confessional "for the absolution of his sins." "Alone among the higher artists of his age," Mr. Swinburne says of him, "he has felt and given the mere physical charm of Christianity with no admixture of doctrine or of doubt." *The Blessed Damozel* is a treasury of mediæval emblems, of phraseology not belonging to any religious sect or type but representing the æsthetic and dramatic mood of a faith that has preserved from age to age the devotional spirit in loveliness of outward form.

If it was indeed Poe who suggested the poem it was no less Dante who inspired it; all that is curious and foreign in it to the reader of modern poetry finds its counterpart in the spirit of the *Vita Nuova*. The

damozel, upon the terrace of God's house, and seeking "the groves where the lady Mary is" among the souls that, "mounting up to God, went by her like thin flames," is of kin with Beatrice, who, "gone up into high Heaven, the kingdom where the angels are at peace," woke "wonder in the Eternal Sire," and spread "even there a light of Love" which made the angels glad. But this is not to say that Rossetti's was an imitative gift. Without Dante he could not perhaps have shaped his beautiful illusions into images of such splendid rhetorical colour, he made his own the mediæval habit of thought because it fitted him and became his quality of mind; but the feeling informing his words is dependent upon no forerunner nor upon any contemporary influence. In the final stanzas of *The Blessed Damozel* he sets his seal upon a haunting imaginative sentiment that whenever it appeared in his work was always to confirm his genius:

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
To have more blessing than on earth
In nowise: but to be
As then we were,—being as then
At peace. Yea, verily.

"Yea, verily; when he is come
We will do thus and thus:
Till this my vigil seem quite strange
And almost fabulous;
We two will live at once, one life;
And peace shall be with us."

She gazed and listened, and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild :
"All this is when he comes." She ceased :
The light thrilled past her, filled
With angels in strong level lapse.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their flight
Was vague 'mid the poised spheres.
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Of the fifty-one contributions to *The Germ* twenty-six belong to the Rossettis, and of these only five are prose. Christina's poems were published under the pseudonym of Ellen Alleyn, which Dante Gabriel composed for her, and, with the exception of the familiar little song beginning, "Ah! roses for the flush of youth," are rather feeble examples of her talent, which developed less early than her brother's. Other contributors than those already mentioned were Calder Campbell, James Collinson, Walter Howell Deverell, John Orchard, William Bell Scott, F. G. Stephens, and George F. Tupper.

The most marked feature of the contents of the magazine as a whole is freedom from the polemical attitude of mind. The rebellion of the young reformers against prevailing conventions found expression chiefly in the production of work of an unconventional character. This surprising lack of dogmatism and even of explanation, has been noticed by Mr. Noble in his paper on *A Pre-Raphaelite*

Magazine, published just after Rossetti's death. A few articles of a dialectic cast marred the pages, but these were in a small minority, and were not in themselves attractive. The true message of *The Germ* was embodied in the poems and etchings and criticisms testifying to the earnest convictions of their authors by the care and originality of their workmanship. The etchings, on which much stress was laid, were, curiously, decidedly less successful than the literary portion of the magazine. Only one, the first, by Holman Hunt (illustrative of Woolner's poems), possesses any elements of real beauty. The second, by Collinson, is stiff and flaccid, and hopelessly unsuggestive. The third is Madox Brown's, and cost him, he says, 31s. 6d., bringing him in nothing, not even self-satisfaction, as it was little to his liking. It was done hastily, to take the place of one by Rossetti, whose fastidious taste would not be satisfied by his own production. The fourth is by Walter Deverell, and portrays much of the extravagance and crudity with which the P.-R.B.'s were charged.

Neither pictures, poems, nor tales, however, were of a quality to sell *The Germ*. The founders made laudable efforts toward financial success, advertising in *The Athenæum*, sending copies to personages in high places, as Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell, and to the principal club-houses, arranging with the porter of Somerset House to sell to the School of Design students, introducing it among artists' colourmen, and employing many other devices to make

friends for it, with a resulting sale of two hundred out of the seven hundred copies of the first issue. "It now becomes a most momentous question," William Rossetti records in the Pre-Raphaelite Diary, immediately after the publication of No. 2, "whether we shall be in a position to bring out a 3rd No." Upon learning a week or so later that some forty copies of the second number have sold, he makes the disheartening entry: "This is the last knockdown blow. We certainly cannot attempt a 3rd No." At this point the Tupper brothers intervened, proposing to carry the magazine on for one or two numbers further, "to give it a fair trial," at their own risk; advertising it more extensively, "a very friendly action on their part."

But the little periodical was doomed, and died with the publication of the fourth number, "leaving a legacy" of the printer's bill, some thirty-three pounds, which in course of time was cleared off, with the result that none of the company "ever again made any proposal for publishing a magazine." It struck an almost unheeded note, yet it was the intellectual prototype of *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, which ran during the year 1856, and of *The Century Guild Hobby-Horse*, which proclaimed from the Chiswick Press the "unity of art," during the brief term of its existence. It should not perhaps be said that *The Germ* did not in any sense fructify, although an attempt to trace the precise relation between the fruit and the seed would be hazardous enough.

CHAPTER IV.

MISS SIDDAL.

THE year 1850 was the visible starting-point of a number of the principal threads twisted thereafter into the puzzling pattern of Rossetti's life. In that year the *Ecce Ancilla Domini*, the first picture in which he tried for and achieved psychological expression, was exhibited; *The Blessed Damozel* was printed, in which are defined the finest qualities of his later poems with "anticipative notes obscurely struck"; and in that year he met Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, who until her death formed his most absorbing preoccupation, and was the first object of that impetuous, dependent fondness which lay at the root of his imaginations and of many of his acts. "For Rossetti," Pater said with truth, "the great affections of persons to each other, swayed and determined, in the case of his highly pictorial genius, mainly by that so-called material loveliness, formed the great undeniable reality in things, the solid resisting substance, in a world where all beside might be but shadow."

Miss Siddal was a milliner's assistant when Rossetti first knew her. The Pre-Raphaelite Brother, Walter Deverell, discovered her in a shop which he was visiting with his mother, and her extraordinary type of beauty prompted him to try to obtain sittings from her. In this, with his mother's aid, he succeeded, and soon she was posing for the various members of the Brotherhood. She was hardly seventeen years old, graceful and dignified in manner, with a touch of the disdain that one observes in every one of Rossetti's drawings of her. Her education was ordinary, but her mind was receptive and individual, judging from the pictures and poems produced under Rossetti's influence,—poor enough, certainly, according to all technical standards, but distinguished by a simplicity verging on stiffness, and by a very plaintive and despondent but not a cloying sentiment. Before her training by the Brotherhood, she had shown her proclivities by hunting out Tennyson's poems for herself, having found one or two of them upon "a piece of paper which she had brought home to her mother wrapped around a pat of butter." Her father has been reported in turn a cutler, a watchmaker, and an auctioneer. One of her neighbours, who knew her as a child and was kind to her, is known to the British public as "a murderer, more than commonly execrable, who was duly hanged." Thus her environment was obviously not favourable to refinement of manner or spirit, yet there is no dissenting voice

to the chorus praising her innate sensitiveness and purity. Ruskin, with characteristic expansiveness, called her "a noble glorious creature," and his father said that by her look and manner she might have been a Countess. Madame Belloc found her "not in the least like a Countess" but with "the look of one who read her Bible and said her prayers every night." Swinburne remembers "her matchless grace, loveliness, courage, endurance, wit, humour, heroism, and sweetness" as "too dear and sacred to be profaned by any attempt at expression." Rossetti himself, in one significant passage of a letter to William Allingham (1854), shows his appreciation not merely of her charm but of the aspirations toward cultivation and growth which she commonly hid under light and "chaffing" talk.

"It seems hard to me," he says, "when I look at her sometimes, working or too ill to work, and think how many without one tithe of her genius or greatness of spirit have granted them abundant health and opportunity to labour through the little they can or will do, while perhaps her soul is never to bloom nor her bright hair to fade, but after hardly escaping from degradation and corruption all she might have been must sink out again unprofitably in that dark house where she was born. How truly she may say, 'No man cared for my soul.' I do not mean to make myself an exception, for how long I have known her, and not thought of this till so late —perhaps too late."

Of the "so-called material loveliness" which meant to Rossetti as much at least as it meant to Dante in his Beatrice, she had much more than the usual share. Mr. William Rossetti describes her as "tall, finely formed, with a lofty neck, and regular yet somewhat uncommon features, greenish-blue unsparkling eyes, large, perfect eyelids, brilliant complexion, and a lavish, heavy wealth of coppery-golden hair." If we add to these details the expression which suggested a morbid languor and dreaminess in curious contrast with the richness of colouring and form, we see at once how adequately she fitted Rossetti's Dantesque dreams with her definite yet visionary beauty. Beata Beatrix she was to him from the beginning to the end, and only one—the last of the many Beatrices of his pictures—was done from anyone else.

At the time she entered upon her duties as a model the Brothers were depending greatly upon one another for the figures in their Pre-Raphaelite pictures. Their intention to cleave to nature had its practical difficulties, and their purses could not, perhaps, bear the strain of many hired models, to say nothing of the inferiority of these in most cases in precisely those traits of physiognomy which they most valued. Thus we find them upheld in the rôle of model as in that of artist by their exuberant enthusiasm, Rossetti posing all night for Madox Brown's *Chaucer*, Stephens standing for Millais's exquisite picture of *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* until

he lost control of his muscles, having to be carried from the room, and Deverell, Stephens, and both Rossettis serving for the figures of Millais's *Lorenzo and Isabella*.

With their conscientious notions the office was no sinecure. Millais's biographer tells the story of Miss Siddal's experience in posing for the *Ophelia*. "In order that the artist might get the proper set of the garments in water and the right atmosphere and aqueous effects," he says, "she had to lie in a large bath filled with water, which was kept at an even temperature by lamps placed beneath. One day, just as the picture was nearly finished, the lamps went out unnoticed by the artist, who was so intensely absorbed in his work that he thought of nothing else, and the poor lady was kept floating in the cold water till she was quite benumbed. She herself never complained of this, but the result was that she contracted a severe cold, and her father wrote to Millais, threatening him with an action for fifty pounds' damages for his carelessness. Eventually the matter was satisfactorily compromised. Millais paid the doctor's bill; and Miss Siddal, quickly recovering, was none the worse for her cold bath."

This episode occurred in 1851 and Rossetti is reported as at that time already in love with Miss Siddal. Their engagement took place, according to Mr. William Rossetti, probably before or not long after the close of the year, lasted nine years, and ended somewhat precipitately at last, in marriage, in

1860, when death seemed about to cut short the lady's life and the dalliance of the peculiar intercourse.

"Like all the important things I ever meant to do," Rossetti wrote to his mother on the eve of his marriage, "to fulfil duty or secure happiness — this one has been deferred almost beyond possibility. I have hardly deserved that Lizzy should still consent to it, but she has done so, and I trust I may still have time to prove my thankfulness to her."

In part the delay was due to Miss Siddal's capricious and waning health making all plans difficult to form and carry out; in part it was due to Rossetti's fluctuating finances and unconquerable inability to hoard, whatever the inducement; in part also it was undoubtedly due to his procrastinating temperament, and hesitation in changing the habitual groove in which he moved. "Why does he not marry her!" wrote Madox Brown in 1855; and in the same year Ruskin wrote, apparently in reply to an appeal for advice from Rossetti: "I have had no time yet to think over your letter; but my feeling at the first reading is that it would be best for you to marry, for the sake of giving Miss Siddal complete protection and care, and putting an end to the peculiar sadness and want of you hardly know what, that there is in both of you."

The following year, again, Madox Brown recorded a night spent in "Gabriel's" company listening until half-past three in the morning to his plans for getting married "and then off to Algeria!"

So matters drifted without too much comfort for either of the lovers. That Rossetti was indifferent is the last thing to be conjectured. His brother describes him as "a lover of boundless enthusiasm and fondness. He made no secret of his condition in the close circle of his nearer intimates. To all other persons he wrapped himself in impenetrable silence, not without some defiant tone; and he employed pet names for his fair one, of which Guggum, Guggums, or Gug, was the most frequent if not the most euphonious." Some of his manifestations of Romeo ardour were quite as absurd as this ridiculous and highly characteristic diminutive "Guggum," which he found pleasure in murmuring over and again to himself at his work. His anger flamed up readily at any slight, real or fancied, to Miss Siddal, and the fertility of his imagination gave him many bad quarter-hours. He was at odds on one occasion with Mrs. Madox Brown for the crime of "doing" him out of an hour of Miss Siddal's society; on another occasion there was a coolness between him and Christina because the latter was not adequately impressed by Miss Siddal; and Stephens, the P.-R.B., fell into disfavour "through speaking irreverentially on the subject of Guggum." All this was part of the mingled boyishness and sensibility that made him all his life, and notably during these years between youth and maturity, anything but soothing to these who became, despite themselves, more or less absorbed in his doings and at the mercy of his comings and goings. The unconventionality

of his temperament soared to heights of fantastic conduct that showed nerves at high tension long before drug or sorrow had affected them. His brother records his propensity for doing whatever he liked "simply because he liked it, and without any self-accommodation to what other people might like instead." Thus, although according to the same authority he "neither drank nor gambled nor betted nor smoked nor amused himself in any rough and ready manner," he was a disturbing as well as enlivening element in the lives of his friends. Madox Brown describes with fervour a visit from him, made during the early stages of his famous "calf picture," when he shared Brown's restricted quarters to be near a calf and a cart of the requisite aspect. After nearly a month of painting with endless emendations and no perceptible progress from day to day, "all the time he wearing my overcoat, which I want, and a pair of my breeches, besides food and an unlimited supply of turpentine," matters approached a crisis. His host was obliged to "tell him delicately that he must go," or else go home at night by the 'bus, which he considered too expensive, or else ride to his work in the morning and walk home at night, which he said he should never think of. And in the end he went. On another occasion he invited Mr. and Mrs. Brown to go with him to the theatre, on "orders," and forgot that after a certain hour no one could get in without paying the price of admission, which his guests were obliged to do for themselves,

he being in an impecunious state. At still another time he invited the Browns to dine at his house, "and never came home, of course." These are fair examples of the entire disregard of the preferences and frequently of the rights of others characterising Rossetti in the practical affairs of life. It is not surprising that even Miss Siddal complained of his "absurd goings-on." What is, perhaps, surprising, is the fact that his friends clung to him as they did, Madox Brown declaring him at his worst "never quite unpleasant nor ever unbearable," and Watts-Dunton, who knew him only in later years when health and courage both were broken, finding in him "an irresistible charm" that made him "a more fascinating companion than almost any other man could have been in the most brilliant health and spirits." A partial explanation of such contradictions may lie in his tacit assumption that all men regarded friendship as he did, and would count it disloyalty not merely to decline, but to fail to run after the chance of being generous. On the very pages that narrate his various misdeeds we read the other story: his readiness in time of need, his delight in furthering the fortunes of painters who might have been considered rivals, his liberal grace in the manner of giving, his entire freedom from small-mindedness and vulgarity. He loved nothing so little as a hesitating response to the call of a friend in trouble.

His attitude in such a case is well shown by an anecdote told by Mr. Hughes. "It was from Munro

I had the story," he says, "that D. G. R., having spent his honeymoon and all his money in Paris, was returning, when he read in a paper he got on the way, of the sudden death of a friend (not a great friend at all, I think), a writer named Brough, one of the class of which James Hannay was a prominent type — a young man with a wife and two little children. Rossetti knew that ways and means would be doubly deficient to the widow in such circumstances. He had spent all his own now; but a certain portion of that existed in jewelry upon Mrs. Rossetti, who no doubt fully sympathised with the trouble in question, so that when they reached London they did not go straight home, but drove first to a pawnbroker, and then to the Brough lodgings, and after that home, with entirely empty pockets but I expect two very full hearts."

And if he was generous with money, which he knew quite well how to get, but valued only for the delight of parting with it, he was even more generous with time and effort, on which he put a higher price. An entry in Madox Brown's diary for 1856 records a different impression from the rueful complaint of misused hospitality the year before.

"Gabriel got Elliot," he says, "a parson who writes for the *Daily News*, and the editor to come and see my pictures and has been at the trouble of writing a long article on them for that journal — Really Gabriel seems bent upon making my fortune at one blow. Never did fellow, I think, so bestir himself for a rival before; it is very good and very great to

act so. Ever since he has felt he had hurt me some little time ago he has done nothing but keep on making amends to me, one after another. As Carlyle says of Mirabeau, how much easier it is to note the flaws in a circle than to grasp the whole sweep of its circumference."

Toward Miss Siddal Rossetti seems to have acted much as he did toward his friends in general, although there is nothing to show specific lack of consideration in any records of his conduct, and certainly no hint of caprice or change in his affection for her. Year after year during their long engagement he was harassed by anxiety concerning her health, fears for the future, and sympathy with sufferings which all his impetuous kindness was powerless to alleviate. . . . He had frequently to find prompt means of supplying her with money for the trips to other climates demanded by her condition, and on one occasion he painted a picture composed in three compartments (the *Francesca da Rimini* of 1855) in a week, working day and night, to get thirty-five guineas to relieve the penniless condition in which she found herself at Paris *en route* to Nice. There are indications that she, like himself, was no adept in the art of managing funds, and Ruskin (who bought the picture) writes with reference to this episode, "You are such absurd creatures both of you. I don't say you do wrong, because you don't seem to know what is wrong, but just do whatever you like as far as possible — as puppies and tomtits do."

Had it not been for Ruskin the course of Rossetti's true love would have run far more turbulently than it did. The friendship between the two men is unique in some of its phases, and a history in small of Ruskin's temperament and methods. They met in 1854, Ruskin inspired to call upon Rossetti by seeing the water-colour called *Dante Drawing an Angel in Memory of Beatrice* which a dealer by the name of MacCracken had recently bought. "He seems," Rossetti wrote, "in a mood to make my fortune," and he was, in fact, prompt to assume the rôle described by Mr. Marillier as "a curious combination of patron, friend, and mentor, not a little suggestive of the benevolent god in the background of a classical drama." Rossetti was dining with him at Camberwell when summoned to his father's death-bed, and Ruskin's letter of sympathy is the first of a long and interesting series marking the growth, and unfortunately the decline, of intimacy. In this letter are mentioned the gift to Rossetti of all Ruskin's writings, pleasure at the suggestion of a drawing from Rossetti in acknowledgment, and a commission for another drawing, to be paid for with fifteen guineas. All the notes were struck at once, —appreciation of Rossetti's "very noble powers," the desire, never very far from Ruskin's heart, to bestow and to make happy, the hint of supreme confidence in his own ability to judge of art, and throughout the joy of copartnership with genius, with unacknowledged and unrewarded genius re-

served for him to acknowledge and reward. These elements, fused by a great magnanimity and kindness of heart, made a sentiment supremely Ruskinian in quality, to which Rossetti responded, and which did not seem to him, he being a giver himself and whole-hearted in his sympathies, so extraordinary as it might seem to the average person of sensible and selfish motives.

The ground once broken, Ruskin pushed on with energy. In 1855 he made a proposal — set in a framework of jewel-like words and charming persuasive arguments — that Rossetti should paint for him regularly, up to a certain value, thus insuring a small but comfortable income in place of doubtful returns from a capricious if not wholly unappreciative public. This arrangement or something like it was duly carried out, both Rossetti and Ruskin bearing themselves for a long time gallantly in the somewhat difficult position they thus assumed toward each other. The prices put upon the paintings were very moderate and were frequently raised by Ruskin five or ten pounds above Rossetti's valuation. For this fine generosity Ruskin had at least the amusement — and perhaps it should not have been grudged him — of pulling Rossetti's pictures to pieces when he chose, of teaching him with the kindest and most amiable didacticism how they might be improved, of criticising, with entire goodnature and a humorous touch, his disorderly habits, his dilly-dallying ways, his nervous impulses,

"sticking pins into him," to use Rossetti's own phrase, "for a couple of hours every three days." A man of even less independence of thought and less waywardness in action might have found this friendly pestering disconcerting, and Rossetti certainly found it so. He seems, however, to have had a just enough idea of the obligation involved in the acceptance of so much kindness to have accepted in a spirit of affectionate banter criticisms that from others he would probably have met with vigorous resentment. Although the intimate relation subsided after a period of years, there was in it at least no discoverable trace of self-complacent patronage on the one side or ignoble sycophancy on the other. Both men were eminently self-respecting and pre-eminently sincere, and Ruskin comes near to justifying the more complimentary portion of his own remarkable description of himself given in an early letter to Rossetti: "I am," he says, "very self-indulgent, very proud, very obstinate, and *very* resentful: on the other side, I am very upright—nearly as just as I suppose it is possible for man to be in this world—exceedingly fond of making people happy, and devotedly reverent to all true mental or moral power. I never betrayed a trust—never wilfully did an unkind thing—and never, in little or large matters, depreciated another that I might raise myself. I believe I once had affections as warm as most people; but partly from evil chance and partly from foolish misplacing of them, they have got tumbled

down and broken to pieces. It is a very great, in the long run the greatest, misfortune of my life that on the whole, my relations, cousins and so forth, are persons with whom I can have no sympathy, and that circumstances have always somehow or another kept me out of the way of the people of whom I could have made friends. So that I have no friendships and no loves.

"Now you know the best and worst of me; and you may rely upon it it is the truth. If you hear people say I am utterly hard and cold, depend upon it it is untrue. Though I have no friendships and no loves I cannot read the epitaph of the Spartans at Thermopylæ with a steady voice to the end; and there is an old glove in one of my drawers that has lain there these eighteen years, which is worth something to me yet. If, on the other hand, you ever feel disposed to think me particularly good, you will be just as wrong as most people are on the other side. My pleasures are in seeing, thinking, reading, and making people happy (if I can consistently with my own comfort). And I *take* these pleasures. And I suppose, if my pleasures were in smoking, betting, dicing, and giving pain, I should take *those* pleasures. It seems to me that one man is made one way, and one another—the measure of effort and self-denial can never be known, except by each conscience to itself. Mine is small enough."

Of the author of such a letter and of the gracious actions preluded by and necessitating such letters,

may well be said what Mr. Brownell has written of him, that "in the pursuit of saintliness, measure had no interest for him."

This saintliness was almost immediately extended to cover Miss Siddal as well as Rossetti. Early in 1855 Ruskin bought all her drawings, declaring that they went ahead of Rossetti's own, which, according to Madox Brown, was "like Ruskin, the incarnation of exaggeration." Soon after he proposed to her a choice of two plans, by one of which he was to buy everything she did as fast as she did it, and by the other of which he was to settle upon her a hundred and fifty pounds a year and to have all that she did up to that sum. The second plan was adopted, and by means of it while it lasted Miss Siddal was able to take far better care of her health than she otherwise could have done, in itself enough to burn gratitude into Rossetti's soul, and spur him out of the selfishness in small things that marred a nature of large generosity and deep loyalty. That it failed somewhat of this, and that Ruskin had occasion to complain, albeit rather childishly, of feeling himself outside of the stronger affections at least of the two people who owed so much of their happiness and comfort to him, is one of the uncomfortable circumstances with which a biographer of Rossetti has to deal. "I fancy," Ruskin wrote to him in a mood of depression, "I fancy I gall you by my want of sympathy in many things, and so lose hold of you." And undoubtedly he did. Moreover his attitude,

kind and generous as it was, was not, as we have said, very different from Rossetti's own attitude, limited by his opportunities, toward everyone about him who had pictures to sell and needed money and appreciation; nor did Rossetti on his part ask love, gratitude, or anything else in return. The methods of the latter were as interesting as they were charitable. He could give the appreciation lavishly enough; the money he could not give as lavishly, but he did not hesitate to enlist the services of those who had it. Madox Brown speaks of his going to a Suffolk Street exhibition and finding there the picture of a butcher-boy, by some unknown young artist, which struck him as uncommonly worthy. "He not only tried to get Ruskin and Boyd to purchase it," Brown records, "but got Dallas to give it a good notice in the *Times*, and would have done the Lord knows what for the man had it been in his power. I could narrate a hundred instances of the most noble and disinterested conduct towards his art-rivals which places him far above others in his greatness of soul, and yet he will, on the most trivial occasion, hate and backbite anyone who gives him offence." This helps to explain the suggestion of ingratitude in his too indifferent manner toward Ruskin, his unwillingness, as the latter puts it, "to put on a dressing-gown and run in for a minute rather than not see him, or paint on a picture in an unsightly state, rather than not amuse him when he was ill." Rossetti's theory was obviously that a visible need

demanded an immediate relief, and it did not matter much from whom the relief came, himself or another, so long as it came promptly and ungrudgingly. He gave and took all his life, and while he was abundantly willing to acknowledge in Ruskin's case the indebtedness he was under and to meet him in a manly fashion on all important questions, he either did not feel enough at home with him or did not like him quite well enough to repay him with the small sacrifices that would have pleased him, and apparently he felt no special obligation to make the effort. In the case of Madox Brown, whose unfriendliness with Ruskin was a thorn in Rossetti's side, there was a very different sentiment, and of lifelong endurance, with more freedom, more ups and downs, more reciprocity. "If *you* can disregard," Rossetti writes to him on one occasion, "as I know you do, the great obligations under which you have laid me in early life and which were real ones, as involving real troubles to yourself undertaken for the sake of one who was quite a stranger to you at the outset—what can *I* think of a matter which gives me no trouble whatever, and in which, were I inactive, I should sin against affection, gratitude, and, highest of all, conviction as an artist."

After Rossetti's marriage to Miss Siddal (on the 23rd of May, 1860) they settled down at 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars Bridge, where he had for some years rented chambers. To gain additional room he took also the second floor of the house adjoining,

and had doors cut through to make it like a modern apartment. Here they lived gaily enough except for the unremitting anxiety caused by the matter of health. "Married life," Mr. William Rossetti truly says, "cannot be exactly happy when one of the spouses is perpetually and grievously ill. Affectionate and tender it may be, but not happy; indeed the very affection bars the possibility of happiness."

Their way of living, so much criticised by Mr. Bell Scott, with its odd bachelor freedom and irregular hours, was nevertheless well suited to their tastes, and they managed in one way and another to pilfer a number of small delights from the miserly Fate that ruled them. Not the least of these was the decoration of their rooms, one of which was "completely hung round with Lizzie's drawings." For another room Rossetti made a wall-paper design of tall trees with fruit, to be printed on brown or blue paper, in rich tones of Venetian red, black, and yellow. "We have got our rooms quite jolly now," he wrote to William Allingham. "Our drawing-room is a beauty, I assure you, already. . . . I should like you to see how nice they are and how many nice things we have got in them."

At this period of his life Rossetti is reported "a thorough cockney" in his tastes, liking nothing better than wandering through the streets of London, delighting in London slang, and fond of investigating all the amusements of the lower classes. "Many a night," writes Mr. Val Prinsep, "during the years

'58, '59, and '60, have I been his companion in these wanderings." On one occasion they went together to a sparring benefit at the Rotunda Theatre in the Blackfriars Road. "Rossetti was no sportsman and nothing of a bruiser," Mr. Prinsep says, "but he wanted to see it and I took him." "I recollect," he continues, "our being shown on to the stage, where we took our places among a lot of sporting 'bungs,' an evidence of about as low an audience as could be found even in London. Rossetti reclined on his chair and hummed to himself in his usual absent manner as he looked at the roughs around him. Possibly the grim scene reminded him of the *Inferno* of his namesake, Dante. Pair after pair of young fellows stood up, sparred, received more or less 'gruel,' and retired after their three rounds. Presently there stepped forward a negro. After his round he sat in his corner and was attended to by his friends, who fanned and otherwise refreshed him. While he was being fanned the 'nigger' assumed a seraphic expression which was most comic. 'Look!' cried Rossetti, in a loud voice, 'Uncle Tom aspiring to heaven, by Jove!' The whole house 'rose' with delight. One of the 'patrons' seated by us wanted to stand us a pint apiece."

From such scenes of this mixed world which he was well enough pleased with, Rossetti turned to gratify another side of his contradictory but always eager temperament by drawing exquisite pictures of his wife, "more beautifully, perfectly, and tenderly,"

Ruskin says, than he ever drew from anyone else at any moment in his career.

Mrs. Rossetti's health was hardly equal to the nocturnal rambles; though she and her husband were fond of going out for their meals wherever and whenever the fancy struck them, and their habits chimed well together. To some extent she continued her own drawing after their marriage. "Her last designs," Rossetti wrote to Allingham in the autumn of 1860, "would, I am sure, surprise and delight you, and I hope she is going to do better than ever now. I feel surer every time she works that she has real genius—none of your make-believe—in conception and colour, and if she can only add a little more of the precision in carrying out which it so much needs health and strength to attain, she will, I am sure, paint such pictures as no woman painted yet. But it is no use hoping for too much."

Very little hope indeed proved too much. In the spring of 1861, a child was born that did not live. During the following months her health, already so frail, steadily declined. One of her most distressing symptoms was a form of neuralgia for which her physician prescribed laudanum. On the 10th of February, 1862, she dined with her husband and Mr. Swinburne at the Sablonière Hotel in Leicester Square. She and Rossetti returned early, and Rossetti left her to give his lecture at the Working Men's College. When he reached home again he found her unconscious from an overdose of the laudanum.

At twenty minutes past seven the following morning she died. Thus the brief period of Rossetti's married life ended.

In losing his wife he lost also the loveliest of his models. In the picture *Beata Beatrix,* painted a year after her death, we see her face spiritualised by its expression of pure and exquisite repose; a memorial the more tender and beautiful that it conveys to the public no idea of its true inspiration, but rests upon its connection with Dante's Beatrice. Rossetti himself thus describes it in a letter:

"The picture illustrates the *Vita Nuova,* embodying symbolically the death of Beatrice as treated in that work. The picture is not intended at all to represent death, but to render it under the semblance of a trance, in which Beatrice, seated at a balcony overlooking the city, is suddenly rapt from earth to heaven.

"You will remember how Dante dwells on the desolation of the city in connection with the incident of her death, and for this reason I have introduced it as my background, and made the figures of Dante and Love passing through the street and gazing ominously on one another, conscious of the event; while the bird, a messenger of death, drops the poppy between the hands of Beatrice. She, through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world, as expressed in the last words of the *Vita Nuova*,—That blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus.*"

On the frame of the picture are the words from Jeremiah uttered by Dante when Beatrice's death had "despoiled the city of all dignity": "*Quomodo sedet sola civitas.*" To have indulged in any exuberance of sentiment concerning a work in which he had preserved the most profound associations of his life would not have been Rossetti; but the flawless charm of the upturned face, surrounded by its glory of red-gold hair, speaks much more eloquently than words of the mood of the painter toward his subject.

CHAPTER V.

THE MIDDLE YEARS.

UP to the date we have now reached Rossetti's works show great variety. It was the "first free running" of the wine, and the years between 1850 and 1863 may justifiably be called the years of his splendour and vigour as a painter. During this period his dramatic invention was at its height, and his colour was brilliant without the hot tones that came into it later. "Many of the little pictures of this time," Mr. Sidney Colvin says, "flash and glow like jewels or the fragments of some gorgeous painted window." He was nourishing his mind on the Bible, on Dante, on Browning, and on the Arthurian Legends, and from these sources he drew an inspiration at once more virile and more tender than the personal inspiration of his later pictures. Before he had begun to paint at all he had drawn some complicated designs illustrative of various themes suggested by his reading, and as early as 1850 he started an elaborate composition based on a line from *Pippa Passes* ("Hist! said Kate the

Queen"), which he cut up, and parts of which he sold as late as 1865. In the same year he painted a remarkable little water-colour from Browning's poem *The Laboratory* — probably his first attempt in the medium so triumphantly mastered by him in after life. It is painted over the pen-and-ink in which the design is drawn, is "brilliant and striking in colour," and, according to Mr. Stephens, reflects the influence of the Flemish and Italian pictures which he had seen on his recent trip with Holman Hunt. As in the picture of *Dr. Johnson at The Mitre* made eleven years later, the types have nothing at all in common with the sensitive spiritual types of his other early drawings or the impassioned, sensuous types of his later work. They are good, solid flesh and blood, and the expressions are those of strong, violent human emotions, far removed from the romance and revery to which his hand was commonly subdued.

He made at this time innumerable designs for pictures, some of which were never carried out, while others were carried out again and again in crayon, in water-colour, and in oil. Many if not most of his later pictures were planned, Mr. Marillier says, during these earliest days of restless, energetic interests. He frequently seemed to such friends as the faithfully industrious Brown to be "working very hard and doing nothing," "diffuse and inconsequent" in his methods, dashing off in the midst of work, for which a definite commission had been given, to carry out a sudden idea involving much

time and trouble, painting, discussing, and arguing his liveliest in the hours between midnight and the dawn, translating sonnets at breakfast, and "making the whole place miserable" indeed for those who yearned after "moderate tasks and moderate leisure, quiet living, strict-kept measure," in their professional routine. But with all this apparent indecision and prodigality in experiment, Rossetti was very tenacious of his ideas, and capable of renewing a train of thought or impression after long interruption. In this sense he was not inconsequent but concentrated. His first conception of a picture held a mature idea from which he did not usually depart, despite his frequent changes in matters of detail. One reason for his proverbial dilatoriness was undoubtedly his "diffuse" manner of working, which permitted much interruption to the principal matters in hand; but another reason lay in the exacting demand he made upon himself to realise his ideal. "With me progress always is and always will be gradual in everything," he wrote in 1853; and again, "I shall never, I suppose, get over the weakness of making a thing as good as I can manage, and must take to charging on that principle." This meant that when he proposed to do a drawing for thirty-five guineas, he put so much thought and work on it before he called it finished as to make it worth much more by his own scale of valuation. Even the rude little drawings for pictures never painted are striking for a certain completeness of suggestion which they convey. They show that

the idea was clearly defined before the pencil began its work, and the next process was not to prune away irrelevant forms and details, but to add embellishment to embellishment until the composition became sumptuous with lavish and always significant decoration.

When Holman Hunt had taken Rossetti in hand to rescue him from bottle-painting, he had mapped out this plan of work for him: He was to take a drawing in which the idea was thus full-grown, and draw it to a large scale on a large canvas. Then he was to paint around the figures a setting of vines, flowers, or still-life drawn conscientiously from nature or from models. This became his habit and, like most of his habits, was of long continuance. He seldom painted even a single figure that was not surrounded by flowers, or decorative accessories, and in some of his pictures, the *Lilith* for example, and the *Joan of Arc*, the beauty of the lilies, roses, jugs and vases, and of the superb draperies far surpasses the beauty of the flesh-painting. In spite of the many glimpses we get of drawings rushed through in a single night, of illustrations brought in "at the last gasp of time" to exasperated publishers, and of decorations begun without any knowledge of the technical principles involved, indicating that, as Mr. Layard has said, he was "eaten up with the impatience of genius," his work when done was not scamped or slighted, but curiously, elaborately, and beautifully wrought.

No better proof of this can be found than is furnished by the history of his period of book illustration, one of the several excursions from his usual path made during these executive years. His first essay was in 1855, a woodcut for William Allingham's *Day and Night Songs*, illustrating *The Maids of Elfen-Mere*. He was so innocent of the tricks of the engraver's trade at first as not to reverse the drawing on the block, but he made a charming design, working on it at intervals from the first "scratches for its arrangement" in the August of 1854 until the spring of 1855, when it was turned out from the hands of the engraver, Dalziel, "as hard as a nail, yet flabby and vapid to the last degree." Mr. Marillier has reproduced one of the preparatory drawings as well as the illustration in the form given it by the engraver, and while a certain power and distinction cannot be denied to the latter it is easy to understand Rossetti's frank fury at its aspect in contrast with the sensitive modelling and gracious line of the drawing. The fault, he admits, may be in a measure his own,—"not of deficient care, for I took the very greatest, but of over-elaboration of parts, perplexing them for the engraver." The engraver, however, had not always followed his line where it was clear, and the result at all events was "a conceited-looking failure," and "such an incredible mull" that it "could not possibly appear." Mr. Allingham thought differently and urged Rossetti to allow it to be used. Finally

the latter consented, reflecting that by going over it carefully and cutting out lines "the human character might be partially substituted for the oyster and goldfish cast of features, and other desirable changes effected." Poor Dalziel seems not to have been particularly penitent, and asked to know how one was to engrave a drawing that was partly in ink, partly in pencil, and partly in red chalk!

In January, 1855, just as the Allingham block was ready for the engraver, Rossetti received a proposition from Moxon to do some of the designs for the illustrated edition of Tennyson's poems which eventually came out in 1857. He picked out for his purpose poems on which one could "allegorise on one's own hook," *The Palace of Art, Mariana in the South, The Lady of Shalott,* and *Sir Galahad,* and on these themes he certainly "allegorised" to his heart's desire. The woodcuts were not, however, at all to his heart's desire. As with *The Maids of Elfen-Mere,* he took infinite pains, only to find his designs — so "jolly quaint, but very lovely," according to Madox Brown — quite different from his idea of what they should be. "These engravers!" he wrote to Allingham. "What ministers of wrath! Your drawing comes to them, like Agag, delicately, and is hewn in pieces before the Lord Harry. I took more pains with one block lately than I had with anything for a long while. It came back to me on paper the other day, with Dalziel performing his cannibal jig in the corner [his signature in very

irregular letters], and I have really felt like an invalid ever since. As yet, I fare best with W. J. Linton. He keeps stomach-aches for you, but Dalziel deals in fevers and agues."

The design for *The Lady of Shalott* he drew twice over for the sake of an alteration, and "corrected, altered, protested, and sent blocks back to be amended" until not only engraver but publisher was insane with worry. It passed into a grim jest that "Rossetti killed Moxon," the publisher dying soon after the publication of the illustrated Tennyson.

In this passion for perfection Rossetti was profoundly justified, and the more so, in these cases, that for a long time the public knew his work almost solely through his illustrations, and that into these illustrations he put so much of his peculiar distinction and charm as to make them his own expression much more than an expression of the author's idea. In fact, Tennyson seen through Rossetti is not nearly so much Tennyson as Rossetti is Rossetti when seen through Dalziel. The annoyances that follow such inadequate interpretation as he complained of are demonstrated by the construction put by Mr. Layard, an appreciative student of Rossetti's work, upon the drawing of St. Cecily for *The Palace of Art*. The angel in this drawing is bending over St. Cecily, "seemingly munching the fair face of the lovely martyr" with mouth "wide open," he thinks. This effect is produced solely by a coarse and unintelligent rendering of one of the

roses in St. Cecily's wreath, but it makes possible Mr. Layard's disconcerting assumption that Rossetti was perpetrating a joke involving something like the betrayal of a literary trust.

Despite his sufferings (and in part because of them) these struggles with the block resulted in important contributions to the name and fame of Rossetti. "T. . . . [Tennyson] loathes my designs," he wrote to Allingham, but the public did not loathe them, and to William Morris they were the star that guided him toward his own interesting essays in the art of wood-engraving. Owing to the care and pride of authorship that made Rossetti a difficult co-operator, his woodcut drawings were almost all of them done first on paper, so that his own interpretation of his own idea was preserved from oblivion, as was not the case with much of the work done by the then modern method of drawing directly on the block.

From illustration Rossetti turned with ardour and facility and the confidence of ignorance to wrestle with problems of decorative art. In 1856 he was commissioned to paint a reredos in three compartments for the cathedral at Llandaff, which John P. Seddon was restoring. This was "a big thing," which he went into "with a howl of delight" after his little work, and did not finish until 1864, receiving £400 for his labour.

During the same year he met William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, the latter having come up in

vacation from Oxford to London, where he visited Rossetti in his studio at Blackfriars. The ultimate result of the visit, which was to change Burne-Jones from an ecclesiastic to a painter, is well known. He began painting under Rossetti's friendly guidance, and his master prescribed for him the very course enjoined upon himself so long ago by Madox Brown. He was first to spend his time in learning to master his materials, and in watching Rossetti's own methods of work. He was next to attempt literal transcription; then to devote his study to the methods and masters of the past, and, finally to work out his own individuality. "In all things a better friend to others than to himself," says Mr. Hueffer, "Rossetti watched over Burne-Jones's development with single-hearted devotion. He allowed him the run of his studio and the use of his models, made him his daily companion, and studied with him."

During this time Morris used to come up from Oxford almost every week to spend Sunday with his friend, and the three would go to the play on Saturday night, and after it was over, if Rossetti's "imperious impatience of bad acting" allowed them to stay it out, they would sit, after the fashion of Rossetti's followers, in ardent discussion until the small hours of the morning, the younger men dazzled and dominated and eager to obey the orders of the "master."

By the end of the year Morris and Burne-Jones were both settled in London, and Rossetti's descrip-

tion of them to Allingham shows an admiration as enthusiastic, if not as worshipful, as that which they frankly bore him.

"Both, I find," he wrote, "are wonders after their kind. Jones is doing designs which quite put one to shame, so full are they of everything—*Aurora Leighs* of art. He will take the lead in no time. Morris, besides writing those capital tales, writes poems which are really better than the tales. . . . His facility at poetising puts one in a rage. He has been writing at all for little more than a year, I believe, and has already poetry enough for a big book. You know he is a millionaire, and buys pictures. He bought Hughes's *April Love*, and lately several water-colours of mine, and a landscape by Brown,—indeed, seems as if he would never stop, as I have three or four more commissions from him. To one of my water-colours, called *The Blue Closet*, he has written a stunning poem. You would think him one of the finest little fellows alive, with a touch of the incoherent, but a real man. He and Jones have taken those rooms in Red Lion Square which poor Deverell and I used to have, and where the only sign of life, when I found them the other day, on going to enquire, all dusty and unused, was an address written up by us on the wall of a bedroom, so pale and watery had been all subsequent inmates, not a trace of whom remained. Morris is rather doing the magnificent there, and is having some intensely mediæval furniture made—tables and chairs like *incubi* and

succubi. He and I have painted the back of a chair with figures and inscriptions in gules and vert and azure, and we are all three going to cover a cabinet with pictures. Morris means to be an architect, and to that end has set about becoming a painter, at which he is making progress. In all illumination and work of that kind he is quite unrivalled by anything modern that I know—Ruskin says better than anything ancient."

In these rooms of Red Lion Square, with their furniture done "in gules and vert and azure," we see the great house of Morris & Co. in embryo, its master and head "deeply under the spell of Rossetti's influence," and at his best when "imitating Gabriel" as far as possible. Nor did Gabriel falter as a guide of lordly impulses. Never had any follower of his to complain of tame or hesitating encouragement on the part of the leader. In 1857 he and Morris went up to Oxford during the long vacation and visited the Debating Hall of the Union Society then in process of construction. The architect, Benjamin Woodward, was fighting for the new Gothic style of architecture against the old semi-classical, and "a feeling of glorification and enthusiasm was in the air" with which Rossetti promptly became infected. He proposed that he and some of his friends should decorate the ten window-bays of the room and the ceiling, doing the work gratuitously, merely the expenses of the little band to be assumed by the Union. The Arthurian Legend, at

that time the pet literature of both Morris and Rossetti, was to furnish the themes for the decorations; the work, which must of course include a large number of figures above life-size, was to be finished in six weeks. The building committee accepted this extraordinary proposition, and Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Morris, Arthur Hughes, Valentine Prinsep, Spencer Stanhope, and Pollen, entered bravely upon their task. "A more brilliant company," Mr. Stephens reflects, "it would, out of Paradise, be difficult to select." Brilliant they were indeed, but they knew no better than to paint in tempera directly upon a new brick wall with only a coat of whitewash between them and destruction.

"There is no work like it in the delightfulness of the doing, and none, I believe, in which one might hope to delight others more according to his powers," Rossetti wrote to Professor Norton, as the pure, bright colours of the designs commenced to glow upon the walls "like the margin of an illuminated manuscript."

Six months instead of six weeks were given to the painting, and it was then resigned unfinished, to fade rapidly out of sight under the onslaughts of the British climate. To-day, Mr. Marillier says, it is "a dingy blur of colours in which may be distinguished the occasional vague form of an armoured limb or a patch of flowery background. The roof alone, which was redecorated in 1875, remains a success, and a tribute to the genius of William

Morris, whose design for it — almost his first work of the kind — was done in a single day and carried out with customary energy and vehemence."

Despite the breakdown of these great operations, certain results of importance accrued to Rossetti from this stay at Oxford. For one thing he gained the material for some fine drawings and water-colours, and for another he gained a model whose curious type of beauty influenced for better or for worse a large proportion of his subsequent painting. This model was a Miss Burden, whom he saw at the theatre one night, admired extravagantly, and knew as promptly as possible in order to beg for sittings. Soon after, she became the wife of Morris. Her pale face in its setting of dusky and richly waving hair is seen in *The Day-Dream*, in *Revery*, in *Aurea Catena*, in *La Donna della Fiamma*, in *Pandora*, in *Proserpine*, in *The Water Willow*, and in many other pictures of Rossetti's later period. Her "deep look," filled with the melancholy of "unhappy Proserpine," suggests "strange ways of thought" indeed, with little cheer, whether it meets you from the clouds of smoke curling out of Pandora's violated box, or from the lovely "thronged boughs of the shadowy sycamore" in Rossetti's own garden. Its mystery is not altogether alluring, and the widespread theory, growing out of its great unlikeness to the expression of any other face known to the picture-loving world — that it especially represents Rossetti's art and

predilection—has kept many people from recognising his more robust and more admirable qualities. It was a curious fate that gave him this model at just the point in his career when his tendency toward mystery and symbolism was gaining ascendency over the sturdier tendencies of his youthful art.

In *Aylwin* the painter D'Arcy (Rossetti) shows to Winifred four pictures of women, two brunettes and two blondes, and asks her to classify them according to her own view. Winifred finds the difference "one of soul" selecting as the nobler types the pictures painted not from hired models, but from D'Arcy's friends and asks if an artist's success depend greatly upon the model. "It does indeed," he replies; "such success as I have won since my great loss is very largely owing to those two ladies, one so grand and the other so sweet, whom you are admiring." The "one so grand" was Mrs. Morris, the "one so sweet" was Mr. Stillman's young Greek wife, who "with reassuring eyes most fair, a presage and a promise, stands" among the "Spring-flushed apple-growth" of *Fiammetta*.

In his list of the models who appear in his brother's pictures, Mr. William Rossetti mentions "a pure-blooded gipsy" as the prototype of the dark woman to the right of the spectator in the barbarically beautiful painting called *The Beloved*. This undoubtedly is the Sinti Lovell who plays so prominent a part in *Aylwin*, but how many of the incidents connecting her generous Romany life with

that of D'Arcy are founded upon fact can only be told us by Mr. Watts-Dunton himself. Her humorous account of D'Arcy's chivalrous attitude toward her, given in the preface of the third edition of *The Coming of Love,* may safely be read, however, as representing the spirit if not the act of Rossetti in dealing with those dependent upon him, or having in his own estimation a claim upon his consideration.

The model who possibly did most to counteract the effect upon Rossetti's painting of the gloomy, Proserpine type of beauty, is she who posed for the figure of the woman in *Found*, and who for the following twenty years appeared from time to time in important pictures, in the *Lady with the Fan,* in *Fazio's Mistress,* in *Bocca Baciata,* in the original *Lilith.* This was "Fanny Cornforth," later Mrs. Hughes, later Mrs. Schott, who exercised, to quote Mr. Marillier's words, "Almost as remarkable an influence over Rossetti's life as over his art." Her long waving hair has been variously described as pale gold, harvest yellow, and red of the shade "belonging to a certain type of Englishwomen in Sussex and Surrey, and seen in combination with brown eyes." Her figure, so far from realising the slender stateliness of Rossetti's ideal, was plump enough to suggest to his extravagantly facetious fancy the agreeable nickname of "Elephant." Her features were notable for a certain kind of beauty, but not that which an imaginative painter instinctively idealises. In most cases, if not in all, Rossetti's pictures of her are portraits pure and

simple ; in them the painter ceases to puzzle you ; he sees as you see, opulent lines and firm flesh, their robust beauty glorified by the ripest and most glowing colour.

The strain of his poetic idea has slipped from him in these pictures and he paints as did Rubens and Titian, with frank delight in splendid surfaces, forms, and textures. He is never so much a poet as when he is painting Elizabeth Siddal or Mrs. Morris, but he is perhaps never so much a painter as when he is painting "Fanny Cornforth."

To return to his association with Morris,—he threw himself into the manifold interests of this architect, poet, decorator, and social reformer, with all the peculiar versatility that enlivened without ever threatening his overmastering vocation. Notwithstanding many and striking similarities of taste, it would be difficult to recall two men more temperamentally unlike than Morris and Rossetti. Morris, as he is described by Mr. Mackail, was interested in things much more than in people. He had indeed "the capacity for loyal friendships and for deep affections, but even of these one might almost say that they did not penetrate to the central part of him." The thing done, the story, or the building or the picture, was what he cared about. And in the ordinary concerns of life he was "strangely incurious of individuals." He could work "with anyone, sympathetic to him or not, so long as they helped along the work in hand." Although the sufferings of

classes of men weighed upon his spirit, he was not the friend to whom one would go for sympathy in distress, being often moved, indeed, to "a strange sort of impatience by the sight of personal suffering." Rossetti once said of him (in "one of those flashes of hard insight that made him so terrible a friend"), "Did you ever notice that Top never gives a penny to a beggar?"

How different this was from Rossetti, the lavish, the magnificent, the expansive, and to a degree the uncalculating, it is hardly necessary to point out. On the score of irritability Morris far outdistanced Rossetti,—the occasional outbreaks recorded of the latter reading like the fretting of a lamb beside the periods of storm and gesticulation in which Morris indulged, or the still more ferocious periods of noble restraint, such as the one in which he chewed a teaspoon entirely out of shape in order to keep himself within bounds.

When Morris moved from Red Lion Square to what has long been known as "the Red House" at Upton near Bexley Heath, Woolwich, he enlisted his friends to aid in its decoration. Rossetti painted on one of the doors two panels in oil representing Dante meeting Beatrice in Florence and in the garden of Eden. The *Dantis Amor* was also painted for a cabinet in the Red House. The difficulty Morris found in getting furniture and draperies of a kind to make the place a true "House Beautiful" confirmed in him a desire to undertake the reforms with which his name

has been connected for the past forty years. He panted for furniture in quaint designs, for wall-paper that should decorate the surface it covered, for glass stained in accordance with the true principles of *vitraux*, for carpets and hangings in satisfactory dyes. Then why not have them? The house was hardly finished when the plan for the Morris company was set on foot. "We are organising," wrote Rossetti, in 1861, "(but this is quite under the rose as yet,) a company for the production of furniture and decorations of all kinds for the sale of which we are going to open an actual shop! The men concerned are Madox Brown, Jones, Topsy, Webb (the architect of T's house), P. P. Marshall, Faulkner, and myself. Each of us is now producing, at his own charges, one or two (and some of us more) things toward the stock. We are not intending to compete with ——'s costly rubbish or anything of that sort, but to give real good taste at the price as far as possible of ordinary furniture. We expect to start in some shape about May or June, but not to go into any expense in premises at first." In April of the following year Faulkner writes of meetings resembling those of the Jolly Masons in character, and adds, "Our firm has arrived at the dignity of exhibition at the Great Exhibition, where we have already sent some stained glass, and where they obtained a medal for 'imitation of Gothic patterns' and shall shortly send some furniture which will doubtless cause the majority of the spectators to admire. The getting ready of our

things has cost more tribulation and swearing to Topsy than these exhibitions will be worth."

Rossetti, Mr. Mackail observes, displayed in connection with this enterprise "business qualities of a high order and the eye of a trained financier for anything that had money in it." And in the prospectus of the new firm he discovers evil traces of Rossetti's "slashing hand" and contempt of difficulties and indifference to scrupulous accuracy of statement, all of which have been basely justified in the eyes of the world by the amazing success of the little company first quartered in a few rooms of No. 8, Red Lion Square, with a small kiln for firing glass and tiles in the basement. Morris, of course, was the prime mover in the actual work of the firm. He hammered and tinkered and dabbled in dyes and wove and designed and painted. Not even the embroideries were neglected by his short, thick, adaptable fingers. "Top has taken to worsted work," Rossetti sarcastically records. But Rossetti himself was fairly zealous in work at first, and the years 1861–62 show a creditable record of designs for windows and for furniture decoration.

One of the earlier ventures of the firm was the "King René's Honeymoon Cabinet" made for John P. Seddon in illustration of the theory he was urging elsewhere, "and has never since ceased from urging," that "in the unity and fellowship of the several arts lies their power." Mr. Seddon himself contributed to the decoration some jocular designs

representing the judicial relations of an architect with a greedy client on one side and with a grasping builder on the other. The panels were painted in oil by Rossetti, Madox Brown, and Burne-Jones, the larger designs representing King René and his bride enjoying their honeymoon in the practice of the arts in which he was an amateur. "Music" fell to Rossetti's lot, and his version, unlike those of his fellow decorators, shows the king more attentive to the bride than to the art, and is very winning and modern, in strong contrast to the clumsily mediæval figures of Madox Brown's design. The smaller panels represented the seasons, Rossetti painting Spring.

Besides this experimental work, and his regular painting, which up to 1863 included more than seventy-five oil and water-colours, Rossetti taught for a time in the Working-Men's College, of which Frederic D. Maurice was head, and in which Ruskin was deeply interested. "It is to be remembered of Rossetti with loving honour," Ruskin writes in *Præterita,* "that he was the only one of our modern painters who taught disciples for love of them." His method was characteristic and unlike that which he used with Burne-Jones. Remembering his own detestation of "bottles" he set his pupils to drawing straight from the model and in colour. "None of your Free-Hand Drawing-Books used," he wrote to Bell Scott who was a teacher in the Government Schools; "the British mind is brought to bear on the

British mug at once, and with results that would astonish you." He would put a bird or a boy before his class and say: "Do it!" without any preliminary explanations.

While he was thus engaged in nursing disparate and dormant sympathies into flame, his human interests as well as his intellectual preoccupations rose highest. The portraits of these years tell their story of inspiring and inspiriting associations. Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Ruskin, all belong to this division of time. Also all but the last of his little visits to the Continent were made before the death of his wife in 1862. No traveller, no adventurer in body or mind, these foreign trips made but a superficial impression on him and apparently not any impression at all upon his work. Some of his critics have traced pertinently enough in his early style reminiscences of Memling, whom he so much admired on his first trip abroad, and have found suggestions of Titian in the later work. But the unstudious way in which he flitted through the galleries, the readiness with which he formed and discarded prejudices, the incidental lightness of his criticisms show that he did not in any particular sense depend upon outside influences, however potent, to form his own individuality. That he did not, accounts in part, of course, for his weakness as well as for his strength. It would be a mistake, however, to judge very deeply of his predilections from the expression he gives to them in his letters.

Always possessed with a boyish horror of fine writing, much addicted to the slang his little circle of intimates delighted in, and scornful of criticism excepting from him who "can prove what he saith with his hand," he said once regarding his own criticism that he was only at home with facts, and that he could not think of much to say *about* things, so that such an expression as "some mighty things by that real stunner Lionardo" may be considered to cover as many emotions as a page or two of Ruskin's eloquent appreciations.

When he was in Paris in 1849 with Holman Hunt he ran across Browning in the Louvre, a little later he discovered *Pauline* in the British Museum, in its anonymous form, and, convinced of its authorship, wrote to Browning about it. This led to a closer acquaintance, and Rossetti saw Browning frequently when the latter was in London in 1852 and again in 1855, and during the ten days Rossetti spent in Paris in the autumn of 1855 their friendship so ripened that he was ready to "boast of some intimacy with the glorious Robert." Browning's portrait, begun in London, was finished in Paris, and Rossetti then looked forward to painting both Browning and his wife in oil, a plan that, unfortunately for the memory of Mrs. Browning's sensitive and charming face, was never carried out. How much more the temper of Browning's mind appealed to Rossetti than the profuse sweetness of Ruskin's is very plainly seen in Rossetti's comments on the

work of the two men. Referring to a passage in *Modern Painters* in which Ruskin quotes from Browning's poem, *The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*, and compares Browning with Longfellow, he writes to Allingham: "Really, the omissions in Browning's passage are awful, and the union with Longfellow worse. How I loathe *Wishi-Washi*,—of course without reading it. I have not been so happy in loathing anything for a long while—except, I think, *Leaves of Grass* by that Orson of yours."

This unsentimental side of Rossetti, this sturdiness that chimed so well with Browning's, is not the quality oftenest seen in his paintings, yet it is a quality that much impressed the companions of his early prime. To a large degree he lost it in his later struggles with melancholia, but he was never entirely without it, and it found a curiously complete expression in the picture painted immediately after his marriage, the *Dr. Johnson at the Mitre*. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* shared, with the *Life of Keats* and *Benvenuto Cellini's Autobiography*, the most lively enthusiasm expressed by Rossetti for biographical literature, and from the *Life of Johnson* he chose an anecdote of particularly Johnsonian flavor to develop according to his own idea, first in a pen-and-ink drawing, and then in colour. The scene is laid in the Mitre Tavern after the dinner with the two young women of Staffordshire. Maxwell was the Doctor's companion on this occasion, but

Rossetti substituted Boswell's more familiar countenance. The treatment is a triumph of realism, such masterly realism as Honore Daumier's in his admirable water-colours. The vitality and interest of the faces are not confused or overborne by any intricate problem of psychology, and the painter's technical ability appears thus to be freed to challenge any doubt of its adequacy. Yet the psychological temper is there to give value and significance to the vigorously prosaic reality. It is perhaps ungracious praise to say that no Frenchman would be ashamed of having painted *Dr. Johnson at the Mitre*, but it conveys as well as may be the sense of the beholder that in this picture Rossetti stepped with a Gargantuan stride outside his special faculty and sentiment, outside his national temperament, outside his technical limitations even, and with a fine gusto took his place momentarily among the realists.

CHAPTER VI.

TRANSLATIONS AND ORIGINAL POEMS.

WHILE tracing the course of Rossetti's painting during the dozen or more years of what are called his first and second periods, we have left at one side his practice in poetry. It was one of his pet theories that English poetry died with Keats while English painting was in the very morning of its youth. This conviction, supported by the fact that his father much discouraged his frequent and apparently whimsical diversions from painting, aided him to an early decision between the two modes of expression almost equally natural to him. By the time he was twenty-four he had "abandoned poetry" by his own assertion. After that he did not resume regular composition until 1869, seven years after the death of his wife, although the impulse that had driven him in boyhood to the translations from the early Italians, and to such original work as *The Blessed Damozel,* was never entirely quiet within him. The story of his literary career up to the appearance of the volume of

1870 is briefly told, and, by virtue of one incident, is perhaps the most curious in the history of modern poets.

"I wish one could live by writing poetry," he wrote to Madox Brown in 1871; "I think I 'd see painting d——d if one could." Twenty-three years before, while he was still irresolute, he had written to Leigh Hunt to find if perchance one *could* live by writing poetry, such poetry as his own, of which he sent specimens. Leigh Hunt's response was gratifying enough to Rossetti the poet, so much so that he "could not quote any part of it lest it should seem like conceit," but to Rossetti the practical man it was disheartening. The translations brought forth the criticism that he was altogether "not so musical as pictorial," but the original poems revealed an "unquestionable poet, thoughtful, imaginative, and with rare powers of expression." "I hailed you as such without any misgiving," said the elder writer, "and beside your Dantesque heavens (without any hell to spoil them), admired the complete and genial round of your sympathies with humanity." Nevertheless there was no encouragement to adopt poetry as a profession. "I hardly need tell you," Leigh Hunt continued, certainly from the fulness of experience, —"I hardly need tell you that poetry, even the very best,—nay, the best, in this respect, is apt to be the worst—is not a thing for a man to live upon while he is in the flesh, however immortal it may render him in spirit."

The truth of this Rossetti could not deny, and in 1853 he laid poetry aside as a luxury not to be indulged in. He had then been writing in a desultory way for some eight or ten years, beginning (as at the close of his life he ended) with a ballad, *Sir Hugh the Heron,* which old Gaetano Polidori valued highly enough to have printed at the private printing-press. This ballad, much to Rossetti's chagrin, found its way eventually to the British Museum Library. Its author left behind him a memorandum of its worthlessness, as there was no knowing, he said, "what fool might some day foist the absurd trash into print" as one of his print-worthy productions. "It is curious and surprising to myself," he added, "as evincing absolutely no promise at all—less than should exist even at twelve."

The life led by Rossetti between the years of twelve and twenty had been precisely the sort to foster poetic instincts, however, and train the poetic faculty. In 1844 and 1845 when he was studying German he made a translation of Bürger's *Lenore* and of part of the *Nibelungenlied.* And from Dante,—the young, rapt lover Dante of the *Vita Nuova,*—always present in his father's study, he had turned as we have seen to the Italian poets of the thirteenth century, revelling in their complicated forms and intricate rhymes. Beatrice was no ghost to him, nor were the dead loves of these Italians buried to him beneath the gracefully elaborate metres of their poetic style, so new and so fascinating to them in its

modernity at the time of their writing. It was his birthright to realise them not merely learnedly but personally, and to interpret them with the authority of fellow-feeling, showing the sincerity, the serious, deep emotions lying at the heart of the multitudinous artifices and mannerisms. Not at all in the spirit brought by him to his illustrations did he work at these translations. Here the responsibility of rendering another's idea with absolute faithfulness rested duly upon him. "The life-blood of rhythmical translation," he writes in his preface to *The Early Italian Poets*, "is this commandment that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty." "The task of the translator (and with all humility be it spoken)," he continues, "is one of some self-denial. Often would he avail himself of any special grace of his own idiom and epoch, if only his will belonged to him; often would some cadence serve him but for his author's structure—some structure but for his author's cadence; often the beautiful turn of a stanza must be weakened to adopt some rhyme which will tally, and he sees the poet revelling in abundance of language where himself is scantily supplied. Now he would slight the matter for the music, and now the music for the matter; but no, he must deal to each alike. Sometimes too a flaw in the work galls him, and he would fain remove it, doing for the poet

that which age denied him, but no, it is not in the bond."

These translations he kept by him for almost as many years as he had lived when he commenced to make them, altering them fastidiously, handing them about in manuscript among the friends whose criticisms he valued, and weighing well the suggestions thus invited. "Of course you know our common race too well," he wrote to Allingham, "to think I should *always* benefit by a warning though one should rise from the grave—but I am sure I should get something out of you." In this way the poems were passed in review by Coventry Patmore, Count Saffi, Ruskin, and others, who bade him count upon their literary success and "something in money also." Ruskin, at that time still much to the fore as a ready staff to lean upon in time of need, guaranteed to his own publishers the sum of a hundred pounds if they would undertake the risk of publication, and in 1861, at a time of great anxiety for Rossetti on the score of his wife's health, the little volume was brought out. In the course of eight years it made him the richer by nine pounds, the profits having that much more than covered Ruskin's guarantee.

Many critics, however, found with Coventry Patmore that it was "one of the very few really precious books in the English or any other language." Its title in the first edition was *The Early Italian Poets*, later changed to *Dante and His Circle* in order to give due prominence to the greatest name of all.

Besides the translation of the *Vita Nuova* it contained separate *canzoniere*, sonnets, and *ballata* by Dante himself and by his predecessors and contemporaries. Rossetti's idea, in his own words, was "to give a full view of that epoch of poetry," in its sentiment, taste and manner, and he "should not have cared to do the work at all unless completely from a literary point of view." In this he succeeded. To avoid the distress of a text "hampered with numerals for reference" and "sticking fast" at the bottom of the page in "a slough of verbal analysis," he was obliged, he said, to put in "a good deal of my own prose," and very excellent prose it was, bringing before the reader the dim and unfamiliar figures of Cavalcanti, Orlandi, Angiolieri, and their group, in vivid portraiture as the wit, the bore, or the scamp of the society and time in which they lived.

Through the translations themselves we have a curious glimpse of the influences that above all others dominated Rossetti's mind, whether he was painting pictures or writing his own *canzoniere*. We see him at heart an Italian and in his most potent interest an Italian of these very Middle Ages. It is, perhaps, perilously easy to find in the accidents of his name and lineage an exaggerated suggestion of his likeness to the Alighieri, but it is no exaggeration to find in what his critics called "an appropriate instinct of style" the spontaneous response of one in an alien age and country to the voice of his own time and place;—the voice of a

time wayward, passionate, poetic, filled with youthful eagerness, charm, gaiety, and riot of thought, awakening to literature and art and the finer aspects of love, fresh in morning activities, puzzled and delirious with the delight of new-born powers; the voice of a place most courtly, rich, and beautiful, one in which to be joyous and generous and tender and ardent, despite mysticism, treachery, and suspicion abounding. The theme of the early poets is frequently love of the most pitiable and wailing type, the lovers "sighing and sorrowing, and languid at the heart," but the examples chosen by Rossetti show also an aspiration toward the loftier elements of Dante's love for Beatrice, the qualities that transformed mediæval love-making from a profession to an ideal. More than one of the poets can say with Jacopo da Lentino:

> Marvellously elate,
> Love makes my spirit warm
> With noble sympathies.

Nor is that side of human nature which is external and unsentimental neglected. In the exuberant sonnets of Folgore da San Geminiano we have hints of a spacious Elizabethan life, not less brilliant and genial because the "blithe and lordly Fellowship" to which the sonnets are dedicated destroyed itself in hare-brained pleasuring. Here is the one for February:

> In February I give you gallant sport
> Of harts and hinds and great wild boars; and all

Your company good foresters and tall,
With buskins strong, with jerkins close and short;
And in your leashes hounds of brave report;
And from your purses plenteous money fall,
In very spleen of misers' starveling gall,
Who at your generous customs snarl and snort.

At dusk wend homeward, ye and all your folk,
All laden from the wilds, to your carouse
With merriment and with songs accompanied:
And so draw wine and let the kitchen smoke;
And so be until the first watch glorious;
Then sound sleep to you till the day be wide.

In the *New Life* even more than in the poems we have the evidence of Rossetti's sympathy with his subject in the pure, delightful, easy diction. His translation as a translation has been given a very high place if not the highest. As an example of gracious, lovely English, firm, significant, and pliable, it may fairly be deemed flawless. If we set a page of it by the side of a page from Sir Theodore Martin's version, which appeared almost at the same time, we get the contrast between worthy interpretation, conscientious and formal, and such expressive rendering as seems in itself original expression.

Take the passage describing the grief of Beatrice over the death of her father. Rossetti's version runs as follows:

"Not many days after this (it being the will of the most High God, who also from Himself put not away death), the father of wonderful Beatrice, going out of this life, passed certainly into glory. Thereby

it happened, as of very sooth it might not be otherwise, that this lady was made full of the bitterness of grief: seeing that such a parting is very grievous unto those friends who are left, and that no other friendship is like to that between a good parent and a good child: and furthermore considering that this lady was good in the supreme degree, and her father (as by many it hath been truly averred) of exceeding goodness. And because it is the usage of that city that men meet with men in such a grief, and women with women, certain ladies of her companionship gathered themselves unto Beatrice, where she kept alone in her weeping: and as they passed in and out I could hear them speak concerning her, how she wept. At length two of them went by me, who said: 'Certainly she grieveth in such sort that one might die for pity, beholding her.' Then, feeling the tears upon my face, I put up my hands to hide them: and had it not been that I hoped to hear more concerning her (seeing that where I sat, her friends passed continually in and out), I should assuredly have gone thence to be alone, when I felt the tears come."

Compare with this Sir Theodore Martin's careful periods:

"Not many days after this sonnet was written (so it was ordained by that glorious Lord of Heaven, who Himself refused not to undergo death) he who had been the progenitor of all the wondrous perfections which were displayed in that most excelling

Beatrice, departing from this life passed of a surety into eternal glory. Wherefore, forasmuch as such a separation is most sad to those who are left behind, and to whom he who has passed away was dear: and as, moreover, there is no relation so dear as that of a good father to a good child, and of a good child to a good father: and as this lady was pre-eminently good, and her father (as by many is thought, and as in truth he was) was likewise eminently good, it needs not to declare that her grief was most bitter and abounding. And seeing that according to the usage of the aforesaid city, women at these woful seasons unite their grief with women, and men with men, many ladies repaired to the place where Beatrice bewailed her loss with many tears; certain of which ladies I saw returning thence, and heard them speak of that most gentle being, and how profound was her affliction. And amongst others these words reached me—'She weeps so, that whoever sees her must surely die of pity.' Then these ladies passed on, and I remained in such distress that my cheeks were bathed in tears, to conceal which I had again and again to raise my hands to my eyes. And had it not been that I hoped to hear more about her (for where I stood the greater proportion of these ladies as they quitted her, were obliged to pass), I should have sought concealment incontinently the fit of weeping seized me."

We realise that it is Rossetti and not the English writer who has found in Dante's narrative the natural

statement of a very natural state of mind, and who in the words of one of his reviewers has "so managed matters that he brings his English readers face to face with the great Florentine of six hundred years ago, and silences that ominous question so constantly recurring to the readers of translations from ancient and mediæval literature, "How did this read to the author's contemporaries of his own race?"

Rossetti's original poems had gone hand in hand with the translations, some of the best belonging to the time preceding Pre-Raphaelitism. In 1861 he had an idea of collecting all that he had written in a companion volume to *The Early Italian Poets*, and bringing the two volumes out at the same time. This project had to be relinquished, but he still looked forward to publishing the original poems in the near future. The dramatic impulse that prevented him was one of the amazing manifestations of a mind rooted in emotion, only to be equalled in strangeness by the impulse that years later resulted in the publication of the volume of 1870.

In the anguish of mind following his wife's death he considered that the poems had been written upon, many of them, when she was suffering, and were thus in a sense records of neglect of her. For this reason he took the manuscript book in which they were copied and placed it in her coffin to be buried with her, thus putting away a long-deferred hope of recognition as a poet.

Seven and a half years after, with his health

breaking, eyesight threatened, and nerves yielding to the strain of almost constant insomnia, he began again to think of poetry as a resource and stimulus in his partially disabled condition. His friends urged his writing again, and more than one has taken to himself the flattering unction of having been the first to revive in his mind the old interest and faculty. In the spring of 1868 three of the sonnets written for pictures appeared in a pamphlet review of pictures of that year, prepared by Mr. Swinburne and Mr. William Rossetti in collaboration. The next year several sonnets were printed in the *Fortnightly Review,* and preparations were made for printing a volume of poems for Rossetti's own convenience and not for publication,—to serve merely as a working basis for a larger volume when the material should be ready, and because, as he said, he found blundered transcripts of some of his old things flying about, which would at some time have got into print perhaps,— "a thing afflictive to one's bogie."

Then began the importunities of those who held Rossetti's fame dearer than his dignity. He was besought to recover the buried poems for the rescue of some which he possessed only in fragmentary form and others of which he had kept no memorandum at all. He naturally was disinclined to such a step; but ultimately he yielded. It is not the only recorded act of his life that is difficult to understand, but it is the only act recorded in which vanity seems

to play a prominent part; and to dismiss it as an isolated and uncharacteristic manifestation of a self-magnifying spirit from which on all other occasions he is seen to be singularly free, is perhaps wiser, and is certainly simpler than to attempt to account for it in any more favourable way.

There is, however, an extraordinary interest in knowing the character and quality of poems worthy in the eyes of their author of such a sacrifice of delicate feeling. What, then, was the volume of 1870? First of all, it was a volume of strikingly original and personal work, although, looking at it in the light of the translations, it shows convincingly the source from which it springs. "*The Poetry of the Italian Middle Age,*" said one of its most discerning critics, "is undoubtedly that which above others has penetrated into the constitution of this writer and become a vital part of himself. There are two ways in which this tells upon his original writing: one by furnishing him with subjects, the other by colouring and entering into his treatment of subjects arising elsewhere." It would be difficult to find in the history of English poetry another example of so considerable a body of verse so circumscribed in its area of sentiment. The treasure of Rossetti's intellect was rich but not various, deep but not broad. He had no lesson to teach; he had no philosophy to explain; he had but a few general reflections upon the life of the many to put into words; he had comparatively little to say about external nature: what

he had at heart to communicate — the true message of all his poetry — was his unalterable and poignant belief that

> To have loved and been beloved again
> Is loftiest reach of Hope's bright wing.

Nor was he a generaliser on this absorbing subject. It was his own love and his peculiar delight in it that was always present to his mind.

It had colour and form : it was, in a word, a picture of the soul's state. *Pictorial* and *passionate* are the adjectives that equally fit *The Blessed Damozel*, *Sister Helen*, *Troy Town* and *Stratton Water*, *A Last Confession*, and all the sonnets of *The House of Life*, despite the diverse settings of these poems. The "ever-present apprehension of the spiritual world and of the struggle of the soul with earthly conditions," constitutes the romantic spirit with which Mr. Watts-Dunton says Rossetti's work is filled, and this romantic spirit in love, never with the grotesque, as sometimes happened with Coleridge and with Blake, but always with beauty, most often expresses itself in terms of egoism. This is most plainly seen in the sonnets of *The House of Life*, fifty of which appeared in the 1870 edition. In these sonnets every phase of feeling is "a port at which the writer's self has touched." No mood is too evanescent, too strained, or too sacred, to be embodied in symbols the materialism of which has given rise to severe criticism. For many a long day the English mind has been in-

clined to forego the æsthetic satisfaction of endowing abstract thoughts with human attributes, but Rossetti stopped at no degree of anthropomorphism. Frequently the result is merely a more than usually vivid diction, as in the lines:

> Lo! Love, the child once ours; and Song, whose hair
> Blew like a flame and blossomed like a wreath;
> And Art, whose eyes were worlds by God found fair,

or else admirably simple and touching, as in the case of the "little outcast hour," which "might have been but could not be" meeting in Heaven the two souls to whom it belonged, and leaping to them with the words, "I am your child: O parents, ye have come!"

In other instances, however, the feeling is itself overpowered and distorted by the weight of the intense materialisation. In the effort toward speech the unspeakable becomes something that in the first conception it is not, something far more gross, more earthly, and less true. Where the poet probably intends to intimate divinely exalted influences alive in the forms of things, the forms themselves are so definitely realised as to clog the reader's imagination instead of helping it. If we cared to get only the finest essence of this poetry, only what would reveal its author on his more elevated and spiritual side, it would be easy to make a selection including such poems as the *Ave*, *The Blessed Damozel*, *Brother Hilary*, *The Portrait*, *The One Hope*, *Old and New Art*, and perhaps half a dozen more from the 1870

volume that should show him dedicate to chastened sentiment and what may be called religious expression. But it would not, of course, any more than a selection from the opposite side of his poetry, be the true Rossetti in all the puzzling complexity of his "chainless thought and fettered will."

The poetic form which best brought out Rossetti's excellence was the ballad. "Ballads," Mr. Andrew Lang declares, "are a voice from secret places, from silent peoples, and old times long dead; and as such they stir us in a strangely intimate fashion to which artistic verse can never attain." Rossetti here was in his element. A theme of legendary significance, an interweaving of the supernatural, a strong primitive emotion, an ancient flexible form,—these elements he fuses with magical felicity.

The gruesome ballad of *Sister Helen*, although far less beautiful and winning in its art than *The Blessed Damozel*, is, on the whole, the most perfect of his achievements in this mode of expression. Its basis is the well-known superstition of the waxen image make in the likeness of one on whom vengeance is to be taken, and then burned down, the victim dying in slow torment *pari passu* with the melting of the image. Each stanza begins with two lines of questioning or comment from the little brother on the balcony, followed by a single line of fierce reply from the sister within at her incantations, and ending with a burden or chorus, the subtle variations of which inform the scene with the emotion of the

onlooker. In every detail, in the swiftness of the drama, in the rapid, red-hot dialogue, in the direct appeal to the reader's wonder and awe, in the recurring phrases, it answers the requirements of genuine balladry. And again, in a way, Rossetti triumphs outside of his natural range, for cruelty was a quality entirely foreign to his nature, and one that he was not prone to depict in his art, yet more relentless and vindictive passion, barbaric in its bitterness, can hardly be imagined than is concentrated in the answers of the sorceress. He knew perfectly by instinct what a ballad should be to compete with the tribe of *Sir Patrick Spens* and *Chevy Chace,* and sent his inspiration like an arrow to the centre of his target. If we compare *Sister Helen* with such attempts to realise the antique spirit of straightforward, unfeigned passion as Bell Scott's *Glenkindie,* or Robert Buchanan's *The Ballad of Judas Iscariot*, we see at once the difference between the natural primitive and the detached student of early forms.

Of the remaining poems two, at least, claim special mention as representative of Rossetti's range and equipment. The most notable is the *Dante at Verona*, full and rich with the Dante sympathy of its author, and with incidents and suggestions drawn from his intimate knowledge of Dante's history. Curiously, this poem has less the movement of impassioned thought than almost any other in the book. The compensation lies in the reflective tone rising to a height of dignity and calm seldom shown

by Rossetti in his poetry, but conspicuous in his personal letters on subjects involving deep feeling. The son of an exiled father, he came prepared to the contemplation of such misery as the flower of Italian cities forced upon the greatest of Italians, and Dante's thoughts and sufferings are real to him as to a Florentine, although he never had set foot upon the streets of Florence. Yet in the following stanzas we get the effect of the long perspective, the retrospective view from which the fire of present emotion is absent ; and we miss the thrill one might expect.

Follow his feet's appointed way ;
  But little light we find that clears
  The darkness of the exiled years.
Follow his spirit's journey :—nay,
  What fires are blent, what winds are blown
  On paths his feet may tread alone?

Yet of the twofold life he led
  In chainless thought and fettered will
  Some glimpses reach us,—somewhat still
Of the steep stairs and bitter bread,—
  Of the soul's quest whose stern avow
  For years had made him haggard now.

Alas ! the Sacred Song whereto
  Both heaven and earth had set their hand
  Not only at Fame's gate did stand
Knocking to claim the passage through,
  But toiled to ope that heavier door
  Which Florence shut for evermore.

Shall not his birth's baptismal Town
  One last high presage yet fulfil,

And at that font in Florence still
His forehead take the laurel-crown?
O God! or shall dead souls deny
The undying soul its prophecy?

Aye, 't is their hour. Not yet forgot
The bitter words he spoke that day
When for some great charge far away
Her rulers his acceptance sought.
"And if I go, who stays?"—so rose
His scorn:—"And if I stay, who goes?"

"Lo! thou art gone now, and we stay"
(The curled lips mutter): "and no star
Is from thy mortal paths so far
As streets where childhood knew the way.
To Heaven and Hell thy feet may win,
But thine own house they come not in."

Therefore, the loftier rose the song
To touch the secret things of God,
The deeper pierced the hate that trod
On base men's track who wrought the wrong;
Till the soul's effluence came to be
Its own exceeding agony.

Arriving only to depart,
From court to court, from land to land,
Like flame within the naked hand
His body bore his burning heart
That still on Florence strove to bring
God's fire for a burnt-offering.

This is the poetry of deep contemplation but not in any sense of drama.

The other poem, *Jenny*, bears much the same relation to *Dante at Verona* that the picture *Found* bears to the pictures in which Dante figures. The

step is taken from the ancient to the modern, and from the intellectual and emotional to the moral. The poem and the picture form, each in its especial art, the singular exception to Rossetti's unmoralising tendency. The subject is the wretchedly familiar one of innocence departed, a subject popular with the little group of English poets just then before the public, and the treatment is grave. How much its effect is the matter of individual temperament on the part of the reader is shown by the conflicting criticisms from writers of equal authority. It is interesting to bear in mind Rossetti's own attitude toward the poem, as he has expressed it in a letter to his aunt whose disapprobation he obviously feared and deprecated. "You may be sure I did not fail to think of you when I inscribed copies (of the *Poems*) to friends and relatives," he writes, "but, to speak frankly, I was deterred from sending it to you by the fact of the book including one poem (*Jenny*), of which I felt uncertain whether you would be pleased with it. I am not ashamed of having written it (indeed, I assure you that I would never have written it if I thought it unfit to be read with good results); but I feared it might startle you somewhat, and so put off sending you the book. I now do so by this post, and hope that some if not all of the pieces may be quite to your taste. Indeed, I hope that even *Jenny* may be so, for my mother likes it on the whole the best in the volume after some consideration."

None of the poems that went into the 1870 volume took their place without minute revision. Wherever Rossetti's conscience may have played him false it was never in the line of laxity regarding the perfection of his workmanship. His letters prior to the publication of the poems indicate endless consultations, corrections, and insertions. "In *Penumbra* I have altered in last stanza 'rasp the sands' to 'chafe.' The other seemed violent and inexact," he writes. And again: "Your last line to the *Satan* sonnet I adopted with a slight change, but am rather uncertain whether I may not change back again." His horror of plagiarism was carried to extreme limits. On one occasion he considered omitting the three important sonnets of *The House of Life* headed *The Choice* because the idea of a single line ("They die not, never having lived") was identical with the idea expressed at the close of Browning's *In a Gondola*. "The point is just what is wanted and not possible to alter," he writes. The care he had for the form of his work was extended to its appearance before the public. He was concerned that the volume which had been so long in the making should receive due welcome at its début and he had no mind to be a voice crying in the wilderness. The sensitiveness that kept him from attempting to force the doors of public galleries with his pictures made him curiously anxious for the fate of his poems. Undoubtedly the majority of poets have cared as much, but in most cases pride or vanity steps in to save appearances,

and proud and self-reliant as Rossetti was in many respects, both qualities failed him somewhat in the question of launching his volume. Bell Scott in his amazing autobiography declares that to the last moment "he *would* work the oracle, and get all his friends to prepare laudatory critical articles to fill all the leading journals." That he did nothing of the kind his brother has shown conclusively, his friends, among them Swinburne and Morris and Sidney Colvin and Joseph Knight, having written from their own convictions and of their own free will. Nevertheless, Rossetti was noticeably solicitous and did plan for a favourable reception to the legitimate extent of sending his book first to two or three papers where he could count upon friendly reviews, and waiting until such reviews appeared before sending it to other papers. This plan seems not to have miscarried, for the *Poems* were received on the very threshold of their publicity with a fine burst of applause, opened by Mr Swinburne's loud and joyous hymn of praise in the *Fortnightly Review*.

Immediate financial success ensued, the first edition of a thousand selling within three weeks, and Rossetti realising four hundred and fifty pounds in three months' time. With this result he was naturally elate, but his first melancholy collision with the inimical critics he had dreaded followed hard upon. In October, 1871, an article appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, signed Thomas Maitland, and entitled: *The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr. D. G.*

Rossetti, a title indicating perhaps as much the proclivities as the intention of the writer. Rossetti was arraigned on grounds of reserve and delicacy in a manner the unreserve and indelicacy of which would be difficult to surpass, and which was certainly not justified by the fact that parts of Rossetti's poetry emphatically invited condemnation. For a writer who proposes seriously to illustrate the human soul, Mr. James says with reference to Balzac, there is absolutely no forbidden ground. There was, unfortunately, no forbidden ground for Rossetti, but consciously or flippantly immoral in his writings, even the freest of them, he was not, and he deeply resented the imputations which involved his character quite as much as his literary ability. The review contained misstatements and mutilated quotations which offered a chance for more or less dignified refutation and explanation, a chance Rossetti grasped to the regret of his personal friends, although his response to Mr. Maitland (who turned out to be Mr. Robert Buchanan) was temperate and well expressed. In 1872 Mr. Buchanan reissued his article as a pamphlet volume of about a hundred pages, much enlarged, with further denunciatory matter and with no retractions. Nine years later, when Rossetti was under the shadow of death, he did retract, dedicating his romance, entitled *God and the Man*, to Rossetti, —*An Old Enemy*. After Rossetti's death the following year he withdrew even from the conviction which had formed the basis of his criticism. "Mr.

Rossetti, I freely admit now, was never a Fleshly Poet at all," he wrote in *The Academy*.

This incident in Rossetti's career would be unworthy of any detailed mention were it not for the physical effect upon its victim attributed to it by those nearest him and most entitled to judge of such effect. At the time the article appeared Rossetti was at Kelmscott, and by his own admission "far from exempt from signs of failing health." Insomnia had begun its devastating work some years before, and the use of chloral had recently been adopted. The end was perhaps in sight independently of any further evils, but the strain upon the nerves by the unexpected and violent criticism apparently induced greater sufferings from sleeplessness and correspondingly increased dosing with chloral, so that by the time Mr. Buchanan's pamphlet appeared Rossetti was in a condition to regard it as the first step in "a widespread conspiracy for crushing his fair fame as an artist and a man, and for hounding him out of honest society." In the collection of his family letters those immediately following the one in which he mentions the matter of *The Contemporary Review* tell sadly enough the story of permanently broken health, depressed spirits, and "an utter sleeplessness in spite of heavy narcotics." The relation of cause to effect is best stated in his brother's words: "It is a simple fact," he says, "that, from the time when the pamphlet had begun to work into the inner tissue of his feelings Dante Rossetti was a changed

man, and so continued to the close of his life. Difficult though it may be to believe this of a person so self-reliant in essentials as Rossetti,—one who had all his life been doing so many things just as he chose, and because he so chose, and whether other people liked them or not,—it is nevertheless the truth, as I know but too well." [1]

[1] Mr. Buchanan's dedication is quoted in Mr. Hall Caine's *Recollections of Rossetti*. It runs as follows :

To An Old Enemy.

I would have snatch'd a bay-leaf from thy brow,
Wronging the chaplet on an honoured head ;
In peace and charity I bring thee now
A lily-flower instead.

Pure as thy purpose, blameless as thy song,
Sweet as thy spirit, may this offering be ;
Forget the bitter blame that did thee wrong,
And take the gift from me.

To a later edition, published after Rossetti's death, were added these lines :

To Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Calmly, the royal robe of death around thee,
Thou sleepest and weeping brethren round thee stand—
Gently they placed, ere yet God's angel crown'd thee,
My lily in thy hand !

I never knew thee living, O my Brother !
But on thy breast my lily of love now lies ;
And by that token, we shall know each other,
When God's voice saith " Arise ! "

By the stanzas *To An Old Enemy*, Rossetti, according to Mr. Caine, was "manifestly touched." He was at all events sufficiently forgiving to discuss with sympathy, upon his death-bed, Mr. Buchanan's then new volume of poems.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AT CHEYNE WALK AND KELMSCOTT.

IN speaking of the publication of Rossetti's poetry we have anticipated the order of events in his life. To return to the date of his wife's death: he almost immediately removed from the Chambers in Chatham Place to 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, the old Tudor House of many associations. The Thames Embankment did not then exist, and in front of the house were all the "boating bustle and longshore litter of the old days." Behind it was a garden of something less than an acre in extent, dotted over with lime-trees, and enclosed by a high wall; also, after Rossetti's advent, populated by as large a variety of beasts as can well be imagined outside of a "zoo." Within were rooms, "old-fashioned, homelike, and comfortable," with many cupboards and odd nooks, and of curious architectural construction. The room adopted for a studio was large (in the neighbourhood of thirty by twenty feet), and a series of columns and arches on one side suggested the presence in former times of a wide staircase. It was lighted by a mullioned window which Rossetti had

enlarged until it reached to the ceiling, and so filled with easels, furniture, bric-à-brac, and pictures that it took an appreciable time for a visitor to thread his way from the door to the sofa on which Rossetti was in the habit of lolling, according to Mr. Hall Caine's account of him, "with his head laid low and his feet thrown up in a favourite attitude on the back." In this studio, hung with his own paintings (which lay also on the floor and against the easels in all stages of completion), Rossetti received his friends with the spontaneous hearty greeting of which Mr. Hall Caine and Mr. Gosse and Mr. Watts-Dunton have spoken, and which never even in sickness or depression was denied those to whom he was really attached. Here he sat late into the night or all night long, as in his Pre-Raphaelite years, in the veritable *conversazioni* of which he was the leader in spirit if not in loquacity. In talk he seems not to have dominated as much as might have been supposed from the pre-emptory, positive cast of his opinions and his incisive expression. At the time Mr. Caine knew him he "required to be constantly interrogated," but caught the drift of a suggestion at once and led it on from point to point, "almost removing the necessity for more than occasional words." A certain amount of wit he had, and more, perhaps, of humour, but in his conversation, as in his letters, the lighter charm was given apparently by a sportive fancy and banter, sometimes sarcastic and always stimulating, the familiar and social side of that great imagination

which was his bane as surely as it was his glory. His mind was teeming with suggestions of a practical sort and with schemes beyond his own compass, which were always at the disposal of those who wanted them. He was as ready to plan a book-cover or a picture frame for a rival as for himself, and the exquisite cover of his *Poems*, and the fitness and oddity of his many frames show the value of suggestions from such a source.

Despite the genuine and deep grief attending the loss of his wife, he was far from succumbing at this time to the melancholia that lies always in wait for temperaments such as his. Mr. Gosse, who did not know him until 1870, declares that any sketch of him would be incomplete that did not describe his loud and infectious laughter; and his brother "apologises to his loved memory" for even alluding to the "trumpery misconception" of him in the current notion that he was "a vague and gloomy phantasist, combined of mysticism and self-opinion, who was always sunk in despondency or fizzing with affectation or airing some intangible ideal." Nothing testifies more conclusively to the excellent fibre of his manliness than the decision and energy with which he threw himself into a variety of interests and welcomed society of a tonic kind during even the first months of bereavement. Indeed, so far from disliking society, he seemed to Mr. Gosse to crave it as a necessity, although he chose to select its constituents and to narrow its range.

When he took Tudor House he was still on the hither side of prosperity, and his rent (a hundred pounds a year, only), was lightened by his taking as subtenants Swinburne, whose enlivening acquaintance he had made at Oxford, George Meredith, whose unlikeness to Rossetti was of a sort to discourage great familiarity between the two, and William Rossetti, who came only on three fixed days of the week, and was, he says, on the footing of a guest after affairs had got into their regular course.

Later, when Rossetti's pictures began to be in steady demand and to bring high prices, he occupied the house alone, although its rent was presently doubled. He entertained sometimes quite regally, and always with frank hospitality. The amount of pains he took to perfect the details of his more formal dinners may be measured by his disapprobation of one Christmas feast for which he had not been able to superintend preparations, and at which the guests were arranged with "all the ladies in comfortable seats on the side of the table near the fire, all the gentlemen facing them," and himself at the head of the table "as though about to deliver a funeral oration." The meats, on this occasion, moreover, were carved in the room, "at least two minutes elapsing before serving each guest," and the butler, "like a fool," asked each which he preferred, beef or fowl! We hear also, however, of the easier practice of inviting "a few blokes and coves" for the evening, "with nothing but oysters and of course the seed-

iest of clothes." Mr. Gilchrist has reported the simple method of his housekeeping: "when his housekeeper wearied him with a dish, he abruptly changed the diet. 'Oh, let me have woodcock to-morrow!' Whereupon his housekeeper with Chinese precision served woodcock in season and out of season."

Not only was he thus a liberal host, but he had the not too usual grace sometimes to receive as guests for months at a time — apparently as long as it suited their convenience — friends who were out of health or "out of luck," without exploiting the service.

Among the companions he liked, but did not grapple to his soul, was Whistler, to whose competitive spirit Tudor House owed much of its interests as a storehouse of antiquities, he and Rossetti establishing a friendly rivalry in the collection of blue china and Japanese treasures. There are tales of Rossetti dashing away from his visitors to secure a bargain which, were it left till morning, might fall into Whistler's clutches, and the market strengthened rapidly under the effect of such zeal and persistence. Old oak was another passion before, as his brother says, the collecting mania became extinct in Rossetti, and he possessed also large numbers of curiosities in bronze, and many pieces of jewelry such as the necklace encircling the strong young throat of his Joan of Arc, and the black pearl set in silver in the picture *Monna Vanna*, to say nothing of the

incense burners, the brass ewer, the loving-cup, the Peruvian featherwork ornaments, the ebony and ivory mirrors, familiar to those who know the pictures of his later life. It was he who gave to the celebrated hawthorn jars their name, and he anticipated also the modern taste for Botticelli. His *Madonna* by that master was bought for the trifling sum of twenty pounds and sold toward the end of his life for three hundred and fifteen pounds.

His collection of animals was significant of a predilection dating back to the days when Christina and he as children visited the Zoölogical Gardens. In the great garden of his new home this predilection had full play and a truly marvellous procession of pets passed through those heavy gates. At one time or another, according to his brother's incomplete list, he owned dogs, rabbits, dormice, hedgehogs, two successive wombats, a Canadian marmot or woodchuck, an ordinary marmot, armadillos, kangaroos, wallabies, a deer, white mice, a raccoon, squirrels, a mole, peacocks, wood-owls, Virginian owls, Chinese horned owls, a jackdaw, Australian kingfishers, parrakeets, a talking grey parrot, a raven, chameleons, green lizards, and Japanese salamanders, besides a zebu who incurred his master's displeasure by ungratefully treeing him. The first wombat was the favourite of these "beasts," occupying a place of honour at Rossetti's dinners, on top of the épergne in the centre of the table, where it would usually remain politely dormant. On one

occasion, however, we hear of its descending at a propitious moment to devour the entire contents of a box of valuable cigars, a story that matches well the account of the eupeptic raccoon who devoured shillings' worth of prussic acid with impunity. Other stories tell us of the mole who was found dead "after being all right over night and eating worms like fun"; of the armadillo who burrowed his way out of the premises and turned up at a neighbouring hearthstone, to dismay the cook with suggestions of the evil one; and of the dormice who ate up their own tails and perished. The wombat, however, was the darling of the menagerie. "The Wombat is 'A Joy, a Triumph, a Delight, a Madness!'" wrote its master soon after acquiring it. This sluggish marsupial, according to Madox Brown was the prototype of the now historic dormouse in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* the same who had to have hot tea poured on his nose to keep him awake at dinner, but declared that he had n't been asleep but "had heard every word you fellows were saying." Many a word worth hearing must have travelled along the auditory canal of Rossetti's wombat, as it dreamed in its own particular and actual Wonderland.

Rossetti's interest in his peculiar playmates was quite independent of zoölogical knowledge, of which he possessed little or none. If we may once more consider Watts-Dunton's D'Arcy as his mouthpiece the following passage shows the particular turn of

his affection for them: "I have a love of animals which, I suppose, I may call a passion," says D'Arcy. "The kind of amusement they can afford me is like none other. It is the self-consciousness of men and women that makes them, in a general way, immensely unamusing. I turn from them to the unconscious brutes, and often get a world of enjoyment. To watch a kitten or a puppy play, or the funny antics of a parrot or a cockatoo, or the wise movements of a wombat, will keep me for hours from being bored."

"'And children,'" I said, "'do you like children?'"

"'Yes, so long as they remain like young animals—until they become self-conscious, I mean, and that is very soon. Then their charm goes.'"

Rossetti's letters contain many an allusion to his "beasts," and from Morris's house at Kelmscott he records an instance of one of the ways in which an obliging puppy (named Dizzy) kept him from being bored. "At present," he says, "I am going about with a black patch over my nose. Last night Jenny *fille* and I agreed to shriek at the same moment (one 'Creepy' and the other 'Crawly') in Dizzy's two ears, while May beat a tattoo on the top of his head. The instant result was that he turned round howling, and bit me (fortunately not Jenny) across the nose, at which I am not surprised."

At one time an attractive young elephant was under consideration as a possible purchase, and to

the dissuasions of his friends Rossetti replied by explaining how useful such an animal might be made to him in his profession. "I mean to teach him to clean the windows," he said; "then, when someone passes by the house he will see the elephant cleaning the windows and will say, 'Who lives in that house?' and people will tell him, 'Oh, that's a painter called Rossetti,' and he will say, 'I think I should like to buy one of that man's pictures.' So he will ring to come in, and I shall sell him a picture."

There is no record that an elephant was ever among Rossetti's pets, but his intimate acquaintance with the appearance of that picturesque mammal is well proven by a series of humorous sketches enclosed in letters to one of his correspondents, in which the elephant is engaged in various human occupations, such as playing cards, digging in the ground, or unlocking secret closets. These sketches are irresistibly amusing and illustrate perfectly Rossetti's whimsical, confidential attitude toward the animal world.

The garden which formed the theatre of many dramas in the lives of his pets was purposely kept a tangled wilderness of luxuriant growth. This was his own taste, as the letters show, but he was encouraged by his friend Watts-Dunton to emphasise its "raggedness" as much as possible, the latter having a passion for "weeds," and Rossetti, "with a good-humoured but uninterested smile," allowing him to indulge it. Jessamine, roses, and marigolds

mingled with thistles. There were Solomon's seal, daisies, blue irises, and rhubarb; fig-trees grew at their own sweet will, and a mulberry-tree and a sycamore are mentioned as particularly beautiful among the trees. As Rossetti became more disinclined to going out into the bustle of the streets he was in the habit of tramping about the untamed place at the rate of five miles an hour for his daily exercise.

In the early sixties we find him making some attempts at being a man of the world. He was a member of three clubs,—the Garrick, the Arundel, and the Burlington Fine Arts. Some of his friends remember whist as having been among his occasional amusements, though he was a poor player and "rather addicted to abstruse speculations on the reasons which had induced him to play the wrong card." "No amount of respect or attachment to his genius," Mr. Knight reflects, "could reconcile players to a partner who ignored or scorned the elementary rules of the game and who could only be regarded as a third enemy. In 1863 he was in Belgium again, and in the following year revisited Paris, this being the last of his short, infrequent trips to the Continent. Manet had recently come up with his new point of view and iconoclastic methods, and this is what Rossetti in full maturity found to say of him and his followers: "It is well worth while for English painters to try and do something new, as the new French school is

simple putrescence and decomposition. There is a man named Manet (to whose studio I was taken by Fantin), whose pictures are for the most part mere scrawls, and who seems to be one of the lights of the school. Courbet, the head of it, is not much better." Much more truly than he realised did Rossetti describe himself when he said on this same visit: "I keep in so narrow a circle that I see little of the change."

The financial history of the decade between his wife's death and the first serious breakdown in his health, in 1872, is a triumphant record of increasing prosperity. He had not long been settled in Cheyne Walk before needing an art assistant. In 1866 he was getting four hundred and fifty guineas for his *Lady Lilith* and considering three hundred guineas a small price for the *Beata Beatrix*. That year his income was rather more than a thousand pounds and the next year it fell little if any below three thousand. In business transactions he was no dreamer, but clear-headed, firm, and competent. In managing the money he thus efficiently earned he was little better than a child. The cheques he received he cashed, and stuffed the money into an open drawer. "Money dripped from his fingers," says his brother, "in all sorts of ways, unforecast at the time, and not always easily accounted for afterwards." He was lavish, both in generosity and in self-indulgence, feeling himself "doubly bound" by his exemption from the cares of a family to provide for the children

of an old friend, and unable to deny himself a superfluous zebu though he must borrow to pay for it. Although to the end his income was large, he had, in his own words, "never a penny to fly with."

While he was positive and uncompromising with the purchasers of his pictures, and at times kept them waiting long and anxiously for the work they had commissioned and paid for (as in the case of Professor Norton's *Before the Battle*, commissioned in 1858 and delivered in 1862), he was nevertheless usually on excellent terms with them. Mr. Leyland, who at the time of Rossetti's death owned a collection of his pictures "second to none — or indeed superior to all others," held him in a regard rather more than brotherly as the relations of brothers commonly stand. Leyland, Mr. Prinsep says, was a proud, reserved man, who from his youth made few friends. He "hated disorder, untidiness, or unpunctuality." Rossetti on the other hand "was impressionable, enthusiastic, unmethodical, yet Leyland, though he was often tried by Rossetti's want of method never wavered in his affection for him from the moment he became intimate with him till he went over to see him die, and stood by his grave at Birchington-by-the-Sea. Nor after his death did his affection diminish."

Rossetti's habits of work during these years were more methodical, perhaps, but not more reasonable than in his youth. Going to bed at three, four, or five o'clock in the morning, he rose when he liked

and breakfasted at the hour he chose and alone, irrespective of any guests who might be staying in the house. He then painted as long as the light served him, and at nine or ten o'clock in the evening started off on his nocturnal rambles or cab drives, something after the fashion of Haroun Al Raschid, giving rise to many a rumour concerning him, and accentuating the impression of eccentricity made on the public mind. In 1867 and 1868 there are ominous intimations of sinking vitality. The question of his ability to sleep comes into his letters, insomnia had obviously begun, and he was, in his brother's words, "one of the worst men living to cope with the fell antagonist." In addition, toward the end of the summer of 1867 his eyesight weakened greatly as a result of overstrained nerves, and he was fearful of repeating his father's fate of almost total blindness. This never happened, nor did his health decline steadily, but there were frequent and distressing lapses from a normal condition. In 1870, he tried the experiment of chloral at the suggestion of Mr. W. J. Stillman, but this first introduction to the drug was not, it seems, the actual beginning of the habit later formed. The facts are given in a letter by Mr. Stillman to *The Academy* (March 19, 1898), from which the following extracts are taken: "During the first year of my intimacy with Dante (1870)," he says, "and when I was a good deal at Cheyne Walk, he was greatly troubled by insomnia, to such an extent indeed, that he had then

suspended work, and had fallen into a morbid and despondent mood with delusions. The efforts of his family to induce him to go into the country, or take any change, were ineffective, and finding him in a really dangerous state of mind, I advised trying chloral, which I had been using under the advice of my physician, and I gave him of my own supply, twenty grains dissolved in three ounces of water, a tablespoonful to be taken three nights in succession, and then no more until three days had elapsed, when if it had the effect desired I would have repeated the supply. He forgot it until the third day, and then took the three doses at once. The effect was not satisfactory, and he reported that he did not care to repeat it, as it gave him a short fit of profound stupor after which his sleeplessness was worse than before and he refused to try it again. At that juncture Mme. Bodichon, who was a dear friend of both Dante and myself, had offered me her cottage at Scalands for a few weeks' residence, and with her consent I invited Dante to make me a visit there. He accepted and we stayed, I think, three months, in which time he entirely recovered his sleep and power of working, making some of his best drawings there, but during the whole time he thought no more of chloral, nor did he need any soporific. I left him, with Mme. Bodichon's consent, at Scalands, and returned to America. At a later date I learned that he had taken to chloral and had fallen into the morbid state in which I had found him in

1870, with delusions still more distressing, intensified by some of the criticisms on his book which he had finished and published while we were at Scalands. He had taken the chloral by the advice of a physician, whose prescription he had made up at several druggists' simultaneously as the amount did not satisfy his craving. Between my prescription and his acquiring the habit of misuse of the drug there was no connection whatever, for a considerable time had elapsed between the two events. It was at some time when I was away from London that the habit began, for the intimacy between us when I was in London was such that he could not have taken it up without my knowledge, and I was unaware that he had done so until the misuse had become very grave. In any case I declare in the most positive manner that my recommendation of the drug had only produced peremptory rejection of it as a remedy for his insomnia."

The description of Rossetti forgetting the remedy for a couple of nights and then taking three doses of it at once, recalls the story in Mr. Caine's book which Rossetti is said to have told of himself "with infinite zest." Having nux vomica to take for a condition of nervous exhaustion, he remembered one afternoon that he had not yet taken the first of his three daily doses. "He forthwith took it, and upon setting down the glass, reflected that the second dose was due and so he took that also. Putting on his hat and preparing to sally forth, he further

reflected that before he could return the third dose ought in ordinary course to be taken, and so without more deliberation he poured himself a final portion and drank it off. He had thereupon scarcely turned himself about, when to his horror he discovered that his limbs were growing rigid and his jaw stiff. In the utmost agitation he tried to walk across the studio and found himself almost incapable of the effort. His eyes seemed to leap out of their sockets and his sight grew dim. Appalled and in agony, he at length sprang up from the couch upon which he had dropped down a moment before, and fled out of the house. The violent action speedily induced a copious perspiration, and this, being by much the best thing that could have happened to him, carried off the poison and so saved his life." He could never afterwards be induced to return to the drug in question, Mr. Caine declares, and in the last year of his life was more aghast at seeing him take a harmless dose of it than he would have been at hearing that fifty grains of chloral had been taken. Unquestionably he was not sufficiently strong in pharmacology to dally with a powefrul drug. However it came about that the chloral habit was formed, by 1872 its effects were wofully prominent. The 2nd of June of that year his brother declares the most miserable day of his life, as Rossetti's wild talk on that day showed that beyond doubt he was not entirely sane.

Delusions ran riot in his mind, and were of the

unhappy nature of prejudices against friends of long standing and complete fidelity. Browning, the "glorious Robert" of the early visit to Paris, was one of these. His *Fifine at the Fair*, just then published, was supposed to contain at its close some lines of spiteful reference to Rossetti, and that friendship collapsed in hopeless ruin, the two men never again meeting or holding any communication with one another. An even more extravagant fancy ranged Mr. Dodgson with the conspirators who assailed him, the famous verses on the *Hunting of the Snark* constituting a pasquinade against him.

After a consultation of physicians, Dr. Hake, a friend who, to borrow the words of William Rossetti, was the earthly Providence of the Rossetti family in those dark days, opened his house at Roehampton to the patient, for whom change of scene was prescribed. On the journey and after his arrival poor Rossetti's mental disturbance was shown in a variety of disquieting manifestations. He was persecuted by the sound of imaginary voices besetting him with terms of obloquy, and during his second night at Roehampton, goaded to the limit of endurance, he made an attempt to end his life by means of laudanum, which, unknown to his friends, he had brought with him. He was unconscious for something more than twenty-four hours, and his family hastened to his bedside hopeless of his recovery. The efforts of Dr. Hake and of his old friend John Marshall were successful, however, in rescuing him,

and he revived, to enter upon his last decade in utter prostration of spirit and in bodily discomfort. Thereafter he was to sink gradually, though still with frequent respites and returns to the appearance of health, under the dominion of a drug as insidious and deadly as that which reigned over the minds of Coleridge and De Quincy.

His way of life had for some time been changing toward increased seclusion and freedom from the responsibility of social claims. A few of his early friends had dropped out of his circle. Ruskin was estranged, and Hunt; and Woolner, the P.-R. B., was no longer his intimate; but when the crash in his health came his old friend Madox Brown, Bell Scott, and Dr. Hake whom he had then known three years, drew at once to his side, and with one or more of them to give care and companionship he was taken to Perthshire, Scotland, where Mr. Graham, the purchaser of many of his pictures, put his two country-places at his disposal. In each of these he stayed for a little time, and then settled for a month or more at a quiet farmhouse at Trowan Crieff, where he lived as wholesome a life as possible, "stumping his way," Dr. Hake records, "over long areas of path and road with his thick stick in hand, but holding no intercourse with Nature"; eating heartily as was his habit, and supplied by the attentive Graham with hampers of grouse, hares, partridges, and gaining steadily in the power to sleep through Dr. Hake's devotion in sitting nightly by his bedside and

repeating every anecdote he had ever heard, and relating every amusing incident of his intercourse with the world. In this way he presently was in a condition to resume work, and left Scotland toward the end of September to go to Kelmscott Manor-house which he had taken in conjunction with Morris the year before, in order to have a place in the country where he could leave his belongings, and to which he could retreat for work as opportunity offered. The opportunity had now come in the shape of a virtual necessity, and until the end of July, 1874, Rossetti made his headquarters at Kelmscott.

"It is a most lovely old house," he had written from there in 1871. "It still belongs to the family whose ancestors built it, and whose arms are still on some of the chimney-breasts. The garden and meadows leading to the river-brink are truly delicious — indeed the place is perfect: and the river-side walks are most charming in their way, though I must say the flatness of the country renders it monotonous and uninspiring to me. However, it is the very essence of all that is peaceful and retired — the solitude almost absolute. Kelmscott is a hamlet containing, I am told, 117 people, and these even one may be said never to see, if one keeps, as I do, the field-paths rather than the highroad."

During his long sojourn the solitude within the house was by no means absolute. One or more members of the Morris family were most of the time

present, Rossetti's friends and family visited him from time to time, and Dr. Hake's son, Mr. George Hake, was with him in the capacity of secretary. His family letters of this period are not conspicuous for gloom or even great dejection. The letters to his mother in particular are affectionately playful in tone and contain many details of the beautiful garden and surrounding country apparently observed chiefly for her entertainment. The antics of his dogs are also chronicled, and there are very pleasant glimpses of his kindly relations to the Morris children who served him both as models and companions. While his health lapsed again toward the close of his stay, and his mischievous habits of dining late, and sitting up most of the night, to purchase sleep at last with heavy doses of chloral, were all tending to make permanent recovery impossible, he was nevertheless neither morose nor devoid of consolations. During his first year at Kelmscott he found a friend after his own heart, Theodore Watts-Dunton, who came to understand him on the most hidden and subtle sides of his nature, and who would one day, he thought, show him as he was to a world of misinterpreters. The versatility of Mr. Watts-Dunton's mind and Dr. Hake's custom of quoting him as an authority on every subject that came up in conversation, caused Rossetti before meeting him to regard him with amusement. The "Oraculum of the hayfields" he called him, but after meeting him he won from him a tender regard and devotion

that made the friendship between the two unique in beauty. Their first intercourse came about through some legal service that Mr. Watts-Dunton in his capacity of solicitor rendered Rossetti. In the end there seems to have been hardly any service that he did not render him. A poet himself and a discerning and original critic, his companionship was stimulating to him in his best hours, and in his worst there is perhaps but one — Mr. Watts-Dunton himself — who knows the extent to which was exercised that power to soothe and cheer by which Rossetti's life, according to his physician, was more than once actually saved. One of the last phrases upon Rossetti's lips was this: "Watts is a hero of friendship," and so much a hero he was that he has never, since Rossetti's death, magnified by an infinitesimal degree his office of friendship — that office most difficult of any to estimate with true humility. "What was called my 'self-sacrifice,'" he writes, "was not and could not be, any self-sacrifice at all. It is no self-sacrifice to spend one's time with a man whose society gives such an immensity of pleasure as Rossetti's gave me," and the best tribute to be paid is absolutely to believe this statement of his feeling.

Rossetti's personal appearance at this time has been described by several of his friends, who remember it in every detail, they think, with precision. No two of these accounts agree in all particulars, but the composite portrait gained from them shows a man of rather low middle stature (five feet seven

or eight) with feet and hands as small as a woman's, and a tendency to stoutness. On the face alone was the signature of his winning and impressive personality. Here in the noble forehead on which the thin hair curled slightly about the temples, in the eyes of a colour between hazel and blue-grey, with indescribable lights moving and alive in the deeps of the pupils; and the strongly marked straight nose with wide nostrils, we see all that was beautiful or imposing in Rossetti's physical aspect. His mouth, covered by a dark-brown moustache, was rather too full and loose-lipped to be attractive, and was slightly satirical in expression. His voice was singularly rich, mellow, sympathetic, and powerful, of bell-like tone and sonority; "a voice," Mr. Gosse declares, "capable of expressing without effort every shade of emotion from rage and terror to the most sublime tenderness. I have never heard a voice so fitted for poetical effect, so purely imaginative, and yet, in its absence of rhetoric, so clear and various as that of Gabriel Rossetti."

Those whose privilege it was to meet him, says the same writer, "in the plenitude of his powers and in the freshness of their own impressions, will not expect to be moved again through life by so magnetic a presence."

CHAPTER VIII.

PAINTING FROM 1862 TO 1870.

ROSSETTI'S paintings during this interval between his wife's death and the great breakdown in his health just recorded, were gradually changing character, and taking on certain qualities of colour and type and handling associated now in the public mind with what has come to be considered his peculiar style, the kind of picture that, when his name is mentioned, rises before the mental vision of those unfamiliar with the widest range of his work. From the full and varied compositions, the small canvases, the dry, lustreless medium of the earlier period, he passed to the large single-figure subjects, rich and fervid in colour, and painted with a comparatively fluid vehicle. Romantic and religious symbols largely gave place to magnificence of decoration, sensitive and refined forms to full and massive ones. The picture that heralded this Venetian manner in its chief attributes was one to which it was triumphantly appropriate: *The Beloved*. "I mean it to be like jewels," Rossetti wrote of it to

Mr. Rae for whom it was painted; and "no one who has not seen it," says Mr. Marillier, "can form the most remote conception of its brilliance." The subject is the bride of Solomon's Song: "Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair: thou hast dove's eyes." In the centre is the bride sumptuously clad in green embroidered robes, behind her a group of four virgins, and before her a little negro boy with a golden vase of roses in his hands. In the bride's hair and on her neck are gorgeous ornaments, and the negro is also thus bedecked: the virgins are carrying branches of japonica and tiger-lily. Rossetti's old friend and P.-R. Brother, F. G. Stephens, finds *The Beloved* the "finest production of his genius" with the exception of one or two later works, "where sentiment of a more exalted sort, as in *Proserpine*, inspired the designs." "Of his skill in the high artistic sense," he adds, "implying the vanquishment of prodigious difficulties—difficulties the greater because of his imperfect technical education—there cannot be two just opinions as to the preëminence of Mr. Rae's magnificent possession. It indicates the consummation of Rossetti's powers in the highest order of modern art, and is in harmony with that poetic inspiration which is found in every one of his more ambitious pictures." In this picture Rossetti took more than usual satisfaction, perhaps because he had tried for the beauty of visible form and colour and left out of consideration the more subtle psychological suggestions ordinarily

engrossing his ardent attention. He had taken a painter's subject, had employed for his principal figure a hired model, and had momentarily freed himself from the mystical side of his temperament. He was in a sense asserting his independence of himself and at the same time giving play to his appreciation of purely external beauty. Looking at the reproduction in Mr. Marillier's book which to a great degree preserves the impression of a canvas dyed with resplendent hues, we see how much of Rossetti is left out of *The Beloved*, and how comparatively tame is the result divested of its colour. In the sweet eyes of the bride, in the little face of the negro, chosen as a bit of "invaluable jet" and in the spirited face of the gypsy, we have vital hints of reality and suggestion, but the Rossetti elements of strangeness and fervour are absent. Very different is the case with *Lady Lilith*, painted about the same time (1864), in which there is a similar frank attempt to realise the utmost charm of radiant loveliness in colour and line. This was one of the pictures that Rossetti could not let alone, and in 1873 he scraped out the head, which was painted from the model "Fanny Cornforth" (Mrs. Schott), and replaced it with a very different type of head painted from Miss Alexa Wilding who was then posing for his more important pictures. Those who have seen both versions are unanimous in preferring the earlier, but the photograph obtained from it certainly in some respects upholds Rossetti's own favourable view of

the change. His problem was to paint a fair, witch-like woman, magnificently beautiful, with sinister intimations of cruelty and craft in her expression. The first type of face, with parted lips, calm eyes, level lids and full chin, represents a combination of coldness and vanity adequately enough, but fails entirely to give the expression of sorcery, of unearthly enchantment, which was in his mind and which he embodied in the sonnet engraved upon the frame.[1] In the later face his craftsmanship came to the aid of his imagination and fixed upon the canvas the primary idea with a power and refinement of interpretation singular even in Rossetti. The significant changes are in the languid eyes with the arched shadow above them, and the peculiar curve of the lids lending a passionless melancholy to the look; in the drooping lines of the richly modelled mouth, and in the firmer and more delicate line of the throat and the deeper cutting of the chin. The character thus introduced saves the subject from the merely commonplace vanity of the earlier presenta-

[1] The sonnet on the frame of the *Lady Lilith* which belongs to Mr. Bancroft of Wilmington, Delaware, differs in the sestet from that quoted in Mr. Stephens's monograph and published in the collected poems. Mr. Bancroft's version runs:

"Rose, foxglove, poppy are her flowers; for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed fingers and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair."

In the other versions the first line reads:

"The rose and poppy are her flowers;" and in the third line "kisses" is substituted for "fingers."

tion, and gives to it the shadow of fatality and the potent magnetism necessary to dignify it and raise it above the ordinary conception of the pride of beauty. The colouring carries out the impression of sombre interest subduing the ample splendour of the effect. Rossetti somewhere speaks of Coleridge as possessing the sense of the momentous: "not the weird and ominous only, but the value of monumental moments," and the corresponding sense in himself of the strangeness of certain aspects of life, the tremendous importance of the tendencies toward good or evil of the soul, forbade his leaving this subject of "the Strangler" drawing men "to watch the bright net she can weave till heart and body and life are in its hold," before he had made it express not merely the superficial meaning obvious to the lightest thinker, but also the tragedy of its perilous charm. To do this by virtue of facial expression alone, or supported only by a sympathetic treatment of colour was the triumph of Rossetti's idiosyncrasy. What others might have done by illustrative composition, he achieved by his power to see the human soul at its most elusive moments revealed in the human face.

The *Lady Lilith* hangs in the home of its present owner adjacent to the noble *Council Chamber* by Burne Jones, and majestically superior to it in profounder symbolism and mastery of one chapter in the psychological story. To have read of the massive waves of reddish golden hair, the crimson

mouth, the abundant roses of the background, the creamy draperies, the flashing landscape reflected in the larger mirror leads one to expect a sudden greeting of blazing colour from the big canvas confronting the door. The eyes most certainly meet nothing dark or heavy, but they are not for a moment dazzled. The strong, vivid hues are fused into such unity, the accents of light and of pure colour have been so restrained, the large surfaces kept so low in tone, as to give such an effect as might be gained from a southern landscape shielded from the sun except where a single ray might touch a cardinal-flower. The white roses with their occasional pink buds are softened to a warm grey tone mottling the background in dim patches; the wealth of tumbling hair through which Lilith is drawing her comb is dark red in its shadow, a dusky brown in its half-tones, with crisp gold high lights on the crests of its rich waves; the dress and mantle are nearly all in partial shadow; the firm flesh of the throat and bust, modelled with a feeling for massive forms greatly unlike the slim shapes of Rossetti's early pictures, is dark for the fair skin of the face, with warm greenish tones; the reds that gleam through the colour scheme like a bright thread in tapestry, range from the reddish violet of the foxglove, through the crimson cord of the hand mirror, the coral bracelet, the red of the mouth and the scarcely deeper red of the poppy, to the shadows of the hair. The eyes are grey; the sunny landscape reflected in the glass

is the tint of ripening foliage. In connection with this combination of colours it is interesting to read a fragmentary note made by Rossetti in 1866. "Thinking in what order I love colours," he wrote, "found the following :—

1. Pure light warm green.
2. Deep gold-colour.
3. Certain tints of grey.
4. Shadowy or steel blue.
5. Brown, with crimson tinge.
6. Scarlet.

"Other colours (comparatively) only lovable according to the relations in which they are placed."

The association of colour and sentiment was always a marked feature of Rossetti's painting, from the white purity of the early religious pictures to the cold, gloomy blues of *Proserpine,* and Mr. Stephens draws attention to instances in which he seems also to have adopted the rather modern notion of symbolising music with colour, notably *The Blue Closet*, which Mr. Stephens describes as follows:

"Four damsels appear in the composition, two of whom sing. Their dresses are respectively subdued purple and black, and pure emerald green and white. They occupy the rear of the group. The other pair are instrumentalists, and play on a double-keyed clavichord (a sort of a dulcimer) placed between them, while the one pinches the strings of a lute at her side, and her companion pulls the string of a little bell hanging next to the lute. The chief

colours of the foreground and its figures are those of the black-and-gold tapestry over the clavichord, the gold of the musical instruments, the white and crimson of the lute-player's garments, the scarlet, green, and white of those of her companion. As to the association of colour with music we may notice that the sharp accents of the scarlet and green seem to go with the sound of the bell; the softer crimson, purple, and white accord with the throbbing notes of the lute and the clavichord, while the dulcet, flute-like voices of the girls appear to agree with those azure tiles on the wall and floor which gave this fascinating drawing its name of *The Blue Closet.*"

We have already seen that Rossetti's pictures, while they bear the impress in almost every case of his subtle individuality, and are readily grouped to correspond in a general way to definite divisions of his life, occasionally include extreme variations. In the remarkable picture called *Found*, for example, begun in 1854 and worked upon for the last time in 1882, only to be left unfinished in the end, we have a nineteenth-century subject, treated in a modern spirit, and painted in a general tone of cold grey, not, certainly, in Rossetti's list of "lovable colours" at any period of his artistic career. In the *Dr. Johnson at the Mitre,* already described, we have the one genre-painting, the one homely and humorous, to be found in his collected works. And again in the *Joan of Arc*, painted probably in 1862 (though possibly later), and now in the possession of Mr. S. T.

Peters of New York, we have a type of face entirely unlike the types usually chosen by him, and a subject equally removed from the bent of his fancy, as in it he devoted his energies to bringing out the martial and not the mystical side of the warrior maid. It would be natural to expect from a painter of his temperament the Joan of the visions, with eyes at least as full of dreams as Bastien Lepage has painted them. Instead he has shown her in the act of kissing the sword of deliverance, with resolution, not revery or inspiration, in her look. The face was painted from a German model, is boyish in feature, and fierce and strong in expression. The dark hair is thrown back from the forehead, and falls heavily over a fine muscular throat. The hands are nearly as expressive as the face, clenching the sword with eloquent gesture. In handling, this picture resembles the *Magdalen,* painted in 1877, the colour lying thick and slightly stringy on the canvas as if oil had been freely used as a medium. "Neither in expression, colour, nor design did I ever do a better thing," Rossetti wrote of it, and it is undeniably more vigorous and bold and inspiriting than many of the works that show more intimately his personal attitude toward life. Nor did he, in this instance, sacrifice to the ascetic sentiment of the subject his colour preferences, now growing so intense. The blue steel cuff gleaming sharply on the right arm is the only note of colour that does not suggest the opulence of luxurious surroundings in a time of peace.

Another picture that was in a sense an experiment, although typifying Rossetti's tendency during his later years to alternate pretty and meaningless faces with those oppressed with psychological significance, is the *Venus Verticordia* of 1864, in which the head and the undraped shoulders of a tall, handsome woman rise above a grove of honeysuckle and against a background of roses. The original is in oil and a small replica was done in water-colour. In this composition Rossetti said he could not introduce drapery of any kind without entirely killing his idea, and it is the only known case in which he used the nude model in a painting.

This picture was the rock on which Ruskin's friendship with Rossetti finally went to pieces, although as late as 1870, according to Mr. Marillier, the two were in amicable correspondence. Ruskin "frankly detested" the picture, Mr. Marillier says, and Mr. William Rossetti quotes pregnant extracts from his letters to Rossetti anent the bone of contention. "You are, it seems, under the (for the present) *fatal* mistake of thinking that you will ever learn to paint well by painting badly, *i. e.*, coarsely. But come back to me when you have found out your mistake, or (if you are right in your method) when you can do better. I purposely used the word 'wonderfully' painted about those flowers. They were wonderful to me, in their realism, awful—I can use no other word—in their coarseness. Come and see me *now* if you like." And at last: "I am

very grateful to you for this letter, and for the feeling it expresses towards me. You meant them—the first and second—just as rightly as this pretty third; and yet they conclusively showed me that we could not at present—nor for some time yet—be companions any more, though true friends, I hope, as ever. I do not choose any more to talk to you until you can recognise my superiorities as *I* can yours. You simply cannot see certain characters in me. A day may come when you will be able: then—without apology, without restraint, merely as *being* different from what you are now—come back to me and we will be as we used to be."

The "wonderful" and "awful" flowers were undertaken by Rossetti in a sufficiently careful spirit to have brought about good results. He writes to his mother of being tied down to his canvas until all the flower part of it is finished. "I have done many more roses," he says, "and have established an arrangement with a nursery gardener at Cheshunt, whereby they reach me every two days at 2s. 6d. for a couple of dozen each time, which is better than paying a shilling apiece at Covent Garden. Also honeysuckles I have succeeded in getting at the Crystal Palace, and have painted a lot already in my foreground, and hope for more. All these achievements were made only with infinite labour on my part, and the loss of nearly a whole week in searching." And again: "I have been so busy that I have not been anywhere except where my picture took

me to look for flowers. I got three different parcels of honeysuckles from three different friends in three different parts of England, none of which were of any use, being broken and faded. Then I got some from a nursery at Waltham Cross which were not much good either, and lastly from the Crystal Palace. All with much delay and bother. So you see I have had a time of it."

However desultory in his methods of work Rossetti had been in his youth, by the time he was thirty-five he had formed strict habits of industry. In a letter of 1865, he mentions that "during the five months ending with the close of October" there had been only twelve days which he had not spent at his easel.

The record in Mr. Marillier's book of work accomplished between 1862 and 1870 includes more than sixty oil- and water-colours, besides numerous cartoons and crayon studies, the last amounting in many cases to important pictures, owing to Rossetti's unique method of treating this flexible medium. In 1864 he wrote to his aunt, with whom he kept up a faithful friendship: "I trust shortly to begin a very large work on commission, and henceforward to do almost exclusively large works in oil. Small things and water-colours I should never have done at all, except for the long continuance of a necessity for 'pot-boilers'." To this resolution he held in the main, most of the water-colours done after that date being replicas of earlier pictures, a form of "pot-boiling"

in which he indulged to a considerable extent. "Certain qualities of oil-painting he mastered with entire success," Mr. Colvin says, in speaking of this transition. "Depth of tone and chiaroscuro he did not as yet seek, but he attacked and vanquished the most daring problems of colour in equal and diffused light. For the combination of keen and flashing intensity with mystery and delightfulness of quality, his painting of tissues and jewels and flowers at this period stands, it is no extravagance to say, alone in art." A later critic, however, writing of the exhibition at the New Gallery in 1898, of some of Rossetti's pictures, considered the charm of the collection to lie in the fact that it was composed chiefly of early work and water-colours. "Rossetti developed a water-colour technique peculiar to himself," he says, "which was strong and vigorous, a technique which he wielded with power. Never has this medium been made to yield more intense or richer colour; and although the iridescent washes which Turner used with such magical effects are left on one side, nevertheless the results Rossetti wished to attain are reached with complete success. It was different when he used oil-colour; the painter and the paint appear at variance; the artist seems to be trying to compel his colours to work in a way foreign to their nature. Beautiful chromatic effects were often arrived at, no doubt, but generally in spite of the paint."

In whatever way he could best reach it, colour

was at all events the preoccupation of Rossetti's mind when he was considering the problems of his art. To make his canvases rich garden-plots of living and glowing hues, this seemed to be his great idea. He cared little for light and shade, he was apparently blind to atmospheric effects; with much feeling for the pattern of his composition, and for the general direction of lines he seems to have been indifferent to the sensitive outline of the human figure and almost devoid of the architectonic faculty. Planes and values were not often in his thoughts, we may fancy, but his enthusiasm for colour grew and ripened almost to decay.

As early as 1854 he wrote to Mr. MacCracken (the dealer who bought the *Ecce Ancilla Domini*):

"I believe colour to be a quite indispensable quality in the highest art, and that no picture ever belonged to the highest order without it; while many, by possessing it—as the works of Titian—are raised certainly into the highest class, though not to the very highest grade of that class, in spite of the limited degree of their other great qualities.

"Perhaps the only exception which I should be inclined to admit exists in the works of Hogarth, to which I should never dare to assign any but the very highest place, though their colour is certainly not a prominent feature in them. I must add, however, that Hogarth's colour is seldom other than pleasing to myself, and that for my part I should almost call him a colourist, though not aiming at

colour. Colour is the physiognomy of a picture; and, like the shape of the human forehead, it cannot be perfectly beautiful without proving goodness and greatness. Other qualities are its life exercised; but this is the body of its life, by which we know and love it at first sight." This creed, announced when Rossetti was twenty-six, might have been repeated with redoubled emphasis when he was thirty-six or at any subsequent time of his life.

Despite the fact that Rossetti in these later years preferred to concentrate his power upon the half-length figures which, after all, were best suited to his technical capacity, it must not be assumed that the abundant and dramatic schemes for pictures in which he took so much delight in his youth ceased suddenly to interest him. The contrary is proven by the recurrence from time to time of such designs as *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon*, and the famous *Dante's Dream*. *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* was carried out during his middle years, and an entirely new design for a *Salutation of Beatrice* was begun in 1880. These, however, were developments from suggestions of the earlier time. As his hand grew more methodical his brain grew a little less eager, though retaining its capability. Moreover, as his brother has pointed out, he was dependent upon a very limited circle of buyers and was constrained to consult their taste as well as his own in the pictures he painted for them, and Mr. Watts-Dunton offers the additional explanation that he

wanted more time for poetry. In a letter to Mr. Hall Caine he himself charges many of his deficiences to sloth. That, he says, is one of his reasons, though not the only one, for falling back on quality rather than quantity in his work, and he is tempted to think with Coleridge :

> Sloth jaundiced all: and from my graspless hand
> Drop friendship's precious pearls like hour-glass sand.
> I weep, yet stoop not: the faint anguish flows,
> A dreamy pang in morning's feverish doze.

Remembering, however, the conditions of temperament and health under which Rossetti worked, and the great physical strain involved in working upon subjects complicated by many figures and problems, one can hardly refrain from extending to him the consideration shown by himself in revising his sonnet on Coleridge. The revised passage reads:

> Yet ah ! like desert pools that shew the stars
> Once in long leagues—even such the scarce-snatched hours
> Which deepening pain left to his lordliest powers.

Mr. Caine doubted if "deepening pain" could be charged with the whole burden of Coleridge's constitutional procrastination, and Rossetti responded with characteristic impetuosity :

"Line eleven in my first reading was 'deepening sloth,' but it seemed harsh—and—damn it all ! too much like the spirit of Banquo !"

It was his repugnance to exhibit his pictures that confined him to the small number of dealers and buyers by whom he and his work were known, but

the repugnance could never be overcome. Even when the Grosvenor Gallery was started in 1877 and he was asked to send his pictures to the annual exhibitions through which Burne-Jones gained his large public, he declined, with the idea that he was doing so because pictures that failed to satisfy him in his studio were not for exhibition rooms. He had in mind a collection of his best work selected by himself some day to represent him before the world, but this plan was never carried out, and not until after his death, when the walls of both the Royal Academy and the Burlington Fine Arts Club suddenly glowed with the rich product of his genius, did the public fairly see him.

He has left so little expression of his personal opinions about painting (has written so few preceptive words on his particular craft), that any indications of his convictions or theories regarding it are precious, and one source of such enlightenment is found in a little enterprise quite out of his ordinary line, undertaken immediately after his wife's death, which sent him back to his old haunts in the British Museum to burrow again among Blake's designs. His aid had been sought in 1860 by Alexander Gilchrist, then about to commence a *Life of Blake*. The little volume of Blake manuscript picked up in the Museum by the young Rossetti so many years before was useful in providing fresh material, and the *Life* was nearly complete when Gilchrist died suddenly in 1861. His widow tried to carry on the

work and Rossetti helped her with the ungrudging cordiality and enthusiasm well known to his friends when in trouble. Besides criticisms on Blake's poems and pictures, he wrote a supplementary chapter for the *Life,* from which may be extracted a passage of much interest in the light it throws on his own attitude toward the combined use of nature and imagination in art. Blake held that nature should be learned by heart and remembered by the painter as the poet remembers language. "Models," said he, "are difficult — enslave one — efface from one's mind a conception or reminiscence which was better." "The truth on this point is," Rossetti comments, "that no imaginative artist can fully express his own tone of mind without sometimes in his life working untrammelled by present reference to nature; and, indeed, that the first conception of every serious work must be wrought into something like complete form, as a preparatory design, without such aid, before having recourse to it in the carrying out of the work. But it is equally or still more imperative that immediate study of nature should pervade the whole completed work. Tenderness, the constant unison of wonder and familiarity so mysteriously allied in nature, the sense of fulness and abundance such as we feel in a field, not because we pry into it all, but because it is all there; these are the inestimable prizes to be secured only by such study in the painter's every picture. And all this Blake, as thoroughly as any painter, was gifted to

have attained, as we may see especially in his works of that smallest size where memory and genius may really almost stand in lieu of immediate consultation of nature. But the larger his works are, the further he departs from this lovely impression of natural truth; and when we read the above maxim, we know why."

Although Rossetti had been called affected, mannered, and not even desirous to attain natural effects, he himself was late in departing from the use of the model in his work. He was forty-nine years old before we find him writing in a tone of deprecation to his brother:

"I rather project painting a picture without reference to Nature from some one of the careful drawings which hang in the drawing-room. This, I have always thought, would be perfectly feasible; and just at present I should find the use of models somewhat onerous, as it interferes with resting when one feels tired." There is no further reference to anything of the kind, and presently he writes of painting from Mrs. Stillman for five hours on the stretch, and in another instance congratulates himself that the season is backward so that he can still get the young sycamore buds to pose for him! Obviously the old Pre-Raphaelite habit of seeking truth clung like a garment, draping his own imaginations. Painting from nature is, however, a very different thing from imitating nature, and the latter is what Rossetti — for better or for worse — was not

equal to. His pictures of people seem always to have been likenesses, yet never, perhaps, the kind of likeness known as "faithful." On the other hand, he was true to the spirit of his sitter as well as to his own highly wrought imagination. In *Beata Beatrix* and *Proserpine* we know that we have penetrated the envelope of flesh and found the personality shielded by it. But in *Found* and other pictures painted from "Fanny Cornforth" we can see plainly, by comparing them with a little photograph of the model once taken in Rossetti's garden, how uncompromisingly he has refrained from introducing more spirituality than those comely features revealed to him, and how carefully he has studied their forms. In the painting of flesh, as has been pointed out by one of his critics, he seemed not to care for reproducing the texture, and he used the expressive features,—the eyes and the mouth,—as symbols of the soul and body. "As the sense of mystery grew upon him," Mr. Watts-Dunton says, "the corporeal part of man seemed more and more to be but a symbol of the spiritual; and more and more did he try to render it so." He tried indeed to make painting as fully as possible a language in which feeling and thought should be told as adequately as in words. While he was prone to help out his pictures with his sonnets he none the less strove mightily to impose upon the pictures themselves the burden of his message. This became in the latter part of his life a morbid tendency, but in its

modified manifestations it constitutes his claim to being not only the most personal painter of his time, but the most attractive to those in sympathy with his attitude toward his material.

Of inanimate nature, the world of outdoors, we see little enough in his work. Just at the end of the period we have been discussing he took an old canvas on which he had in 1850 painted a landscape, and added to it a composition of four figures, two playing on instruments and two dancing in the middle distance, and while he was at Kelmscott he painted the picture called *Water Willow*, in which the pale face and dusky hair of Mrs. Morris are seen against a background showing the old manor-house and the winding river with its green, sloping banks. With the setting of the figures in *Found* he struggled for nearly thirty years, and finally Burne-Jones washed in the sky and brought the various details together after a fashion. This seems to be the extent to which landscape entered into his painting. A number of his acquaintances have recorded his great indifference to the actual world even under its most beautiful aspects. Apparently it did not stir him to any marked degree, yet it cannot truly be said to have made no impression upon him. In his poetry, if not in his painting, we come upon descriptions as accurate as any by Tennyson or Wordsworth, and imbued with psychological suggestion such as Coleridge might have given them.

In one of his letters from Hastings during the sum-

mer of 1850, is a passage difficult to surpass in its rendering of an emotional phase of natural scenery, and the description was later repeated in the poem *Even So*.

"There are dense fogs of heat here now," he wrote in the letter, "through which sea and sky loom as one wall with the webbed craft creeping on it like flies, or standing there as if they would drop off dead. I wandered over the baked cliffs, seeking rest and finding none."

And here is the verse from the poem, not quite so poetic as the prose :

> But the sea stands spread
> As one wall with the flat skies,
> Where the lean black craft like flies
> Seem well-nigh stagnated,
> Soon to drop off dead.

Some of his appreciations of Blake's hand-coloured prints in the *Life* just now referred to also reveal a sympathy both sensitive and deep with effects of light and air and the colour of the fair natural world. He speaks of "the almost miraculous expression of the glow of freedom and of air in closing sunset" in a plate where "a youth and maiden, lightly embraced, are racing along a saddened low-lit hill against an open sky of blazing and changing wonder"; of "a soft-complexioned sky of fleeting rose and tingling grey such as only dawn and dreams can show us"; of "the momentary sense of spring in winter sunshine, the long sunsets long ago, and falling fires on many distant hills."

At Kelmscott, too, he wrote two or three exquisite poems "from nature" as he said, one of them *Sunset Wings,* in which is recorded the habit of the starlings there to sink "ere they rest with day."

> Clamorous like mill-waters at wild play
> By turns in every copse.

Not in any respect a devotee of Nature he cannot fairly be called insensitive to her moods when they chanced within the range of his introspective vision. Perhaps his comment on Wordsworth will best suggest his own very different attitude: "He thought Wordsworth was too much the High Priest of Nature to be her lover," Mr. Caine reports, "too much concerned to transfigure into poetry his pantheo-Christian philosophy regarding Nature, to drop to his knees in simple love of her to thank God that she was beautiful."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSING YEARS.

THE two years spent by Rossetti at Kelmscott seem to have been passed under conditions most favourable to him. From the tone of his family letters one would conjecture a man busy with affairs that interested him and finding a natural relaxation in simple amusements. He was painting from Mrs. Morris and from Miss Wilding with much satisfaction in the results, considering the *Proserpine* and the *Ghirlandata* each in turn "about the best thing" he had done. He produced little poetry, but his cordial review of Dr. Hake's *Parables and Poems* was written at this time, and a new edition of the Italian translations was brought out under the title, *Dante and His Circle*. He had also an idea of translating and editing the poems of Michelangelo and sent for a number of books to aid him in the task. "My own impression," he said, "is that Michelangelo stands about alone as a good Italian poet after Dante etc., unless we except Poliziano." This scheme came to nothing, but shows that his interest in liter-

ary enterprises was not quenched by the criticism that so seriously had affected his mind and spirits.

The idea of a trip to Italy also tempted him at last, and this, too, came to nothing. The spring before his return to London his brother was married, and we find him demurring at joining in the wedding festivities. "I am most loath, even to great regret, to be away from the party on the eve of your wedding; but the fact is that, at such a gathering as you indicate, every bore I know and don't know would swoop down on me after these two years' absence, and I am not equal to it, now that solitude is the habit of my life."

This sentence is the only hint that reaches us through his letters of the sad drama going on beneath the apparently commonplace surface of a daily existence marked by records of frolics with children and dogs, of the blooming of flowers in their seasons, of books read and friends affectionately remembered, and of long walks over the country about Kelmscott.

Solitude, however, had indeed become the habit of Rossetti's inner even more than of his outer life. He was living more and more in a world of illusions, isolating him from those nearest him and dogging the wholesome natural thoughts that never entirely forsook him, with sleuth-hound persistence. Morris thought him from the first "unromantically discontented" with Kelmscott, and "in all sorts of ways unsympathetic with the sweet, simple old place,"

and was glad when he was out of it. But the condition into which he was lapsing might better have provoked pity than irritation. Like Coleridge he was constantly in the presence of

> a lurid light, a trampling throng,
> Sense of intolerable wrong,

but, unlike Coleridge, he kept his sufferings out of his writing, and his intimates only knew them. On one of his walks beside the river in the company of young Hake, he encountered a party of anglers. His imagination took sudden fire, and he fancied them insulting him and calling out to him in offensive language. Incensed beyond control, he ran up to them and lustily abused them to their not unnatural astonishment. The story was promptly circulated through the little hamlet "of 117 people," and Rossetti left Kelmscott never to go back to it.

His departure from the house which he had shared with Morris was closely followed by the dissolution of the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. The business had been built up chiefly by the energy and talent of Morris, who also had contributed most of the capital. According to the terms of the partnership, however, each of the other partners, who had contributed but a trifling sum towards capital, and who had been paid at the time for any assistance they gave, was entitled to an equal share of the value of the business. This legal right Burne-Jones, Faulkner, and Webb refused to accept.

Madox Brown was not willing to forego it and was finally bought out. Rossetti, according to his brother's account, "retired from the firm without desiring any compensation for his own benefit," and set aside the portion assigned him "for the eventual advantage of a member of the Morris family," but—characteristically—trenched upon it before his death. Mr. Mackail in his *Life of Morris* declares that the transaction "snapped the chain of attachment between Morris and Rossetti which had for other reasons long been wearing thin," and adds that from this time forward Morris was no longer to be seen in Rossetti's house at Cheyne Walk, as "the estrangement between the two powerful and self-centred personalities was final." Obviously Rossetti's attitude did not convince Morris of his disinterestedness, but greed is not a fault easy to reconcile with his qualities, and if this occasion appeared to bring it out, it is entirely conceivable that he was influenced more by a sense of loyalty to Madox Brown, who was his oldest friend, than by any desire to turn the labours of others to his own profit. At about this time he was offering a predella picture to Mr. Graham at a reduced price, stipulating that the difference should be spent in buying pictures from a friend in difficulties, and the constant indication of such impulses makes it impossible to think of him as sordidly inclined, although it is possible to imagine in him a streak of obstinate hardness that would resist opposition to the last instant of recorded time.

After his return to Cheyne Walk he led a life of comparative seclusion, going out chiefly at night and making few visits among his friends. Mr. George Hake continued for a time to live with him, and also his assistant, Mr. Treffry Dunn. A number of the friends who came most frequently to the house belonged to a generation later than his own, although certain ones of the older circle were constant in attendance. His industry was not yet lessened by his waning vitality. Mrs. Darmesteter is authority for the story of his having made quite early in his career a resolution to do something, be it little or great, in the way of work each day of his life. To the spirit of this resolution, she says, he remained true through sorrow, illness, and dire despondency, and she tells a pretty anecdote in illustration of his persistence. One day, returning from a forlorn walk, unfit for work and depressed by idleness, he turned mechanically the leaves of a book on plants and opened it at a page on which was an illustration of the wood-spurge. Racking his brain for an idea with which to save the day from utter worthlessness as a working period, he could think of nothing but the meaningless little flower beneath his eye. The outcome was a vivid poem, the last two verses of which are these:

> My eyes, wide open, had the run
> Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
> Among those few, out of the sun,
> The wood-spurge flowered, three cups in one.
>
> From perfect grief there need not be
> Wisdom or even memory:

One thing then learnt remains to me,
The wood-spurge has a cup of three.

Whatever his method of discipline, he managed to keep his hand busy, and if the old desultory inconsequence still abode with him, his biographers have not enlightened us, and his work does not betray him. A couple of years before his death he told Mr. Caine that although in early life his painting had tormented him more than enough, it now took little out of him. "I paint," he said, "by a set of unwritten but clearly defined rules, which I could teach to a man as systematically as you could teach arithmetic." Beyond the fundamental conception, to which he always gave its importance, he declared there was little in a picture that could not thus be done by rule. "In painting, after all, there is in the less important details something of the craft of a superior carpenter, and the part of a picture that is not mechanical is often trivial enough."

Making due allowance for his tendency to bluff aside any reference to his art that savoured of magniloquence, this comment shows him in very complete possession of his instrument for the limited uses to which he chose to put it.

Of his poetry, however, he spoke in a different tone, and perhaps with some conscious exaggeration, when he described himself as the reverse of a poet like Swinburne, for whose method of production "inspiration is indeed the word. With me the case is different. I lie on the couch, the

racked and tortured medium, never permitted an instant's surcease of agony until the thing on hand is finished."

His painting toward the end of his life brought him large prices, owing less to his own efforts, perhaps, than to those of a certain Mr. Howell who was his agent during his Kelmscott exile and for some years after. In 1876 he himself regarded the three thousand seven hundred and twenty-five pounds which he had made during the preceding year as representing his average income. The picture called *Venus Astarte,* finished early in 1877, had brought the large sum of two thousand one hundred pounds, and the *Proserpine* precisely half that amount. To some enthusiasts the pictures of this late time are the true Rossetti pictures, but most of his critics agree in finding even in the lovely *Fiammetta,* gracious and young against her apple-blossom background, traces of deterioration. It was not, Mr. Watts-Dunton insists, that Rossetti could not now have equalled the best work of his sturdiest years, had he wished to do so, but that in his chase of symbol to the very doorway of the dead, he chose to relinquish much of his more comprehensible method. "Down to the very last his faculties remained unimpaired," says this loyal friend, "and he could have painted flesh as brilliantly as he painted it in *The Beloved* and *Monna Vanna;* but by a method of his own (laying in his heads in genuine ultramarine and white), he hoped to give, and did

give, in his after-painting that mysterious and dreamy suggestiveness to the flesh which his mysterious conceptions required." The *Venus Astarte* was one of the paintings in which especially this tendency held sway over the ordinary elements of the artistic medium. The idea of the Syrian Venus worshipped in Carthage may possibly have been suggested to Rossetti by Flaubert's Carthaginian novel, *Salammbô*, which he was reading during the first months of his stay at Kelmscott, and which seemed to him "the work of a nation from which mercy had been cast out." Whether this was the case or whether, as Mr. Watts-Dunton intimates, the idea came from one of Rossetti's friends who saw in a study of Mrs. Morris's head the attributes of an Oriental Venus, he could not constrain his imaginative sympathy with the type, and made his painting so sombre, powerful, and mystical that the British mind has constantly been perplexed and irritated by it.

In the same year with the commencement of the *Venus Astarte*, the commonplace and elaborate design for *The Sphinx* (never to be carried out in colour) was made, and is only interesting from the fact that it was suggested by the death of Madox Brown's boy Oliver, who died at twenty, denied the fulfilment of exceptional promise. The sonnet on his death is a direct expression of Rossetti's attitude toward the question of immortality, an expression of complete and frank agnosticism:

A mist has risen : we see the youth no more :
Does he see on and strive on? And may we
Late-tottering world-worn hence, find *his* to be
The young strong hand which helps us up that shore?
Or, echoing the No More with Nevermore,
Must Night be ours and his? We hope : and he?

Much of Rossetti's work after 1872 consisted of replicas. The *Beata Beatrix* was four times repeated, once in water-colour and three times in oil. The *Blessed Damozel,* inspired by the early poem, was painted in 1870 and repeated with modifications two years later. The *Proserpine* met with a variety of accidents, and five or six versions exist, the latest one having been completed the very year of Rossetti's death. To that last year also belongs a replica of the *Joan of Arc.* His largest but not his greatest picture, the *Dante's Dream,* now hanging in the Walker Art Gallery at Liverpool, was begun in 1870 and painted again on a smaller scale in 1880. This picture is a striking example of Rossetti's occasional perversity in dealing with buyers. Mr. Graham had commissioned it at the price of fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds, suggesting that the size should be six feet by three and a half. Rossetti, however, had in mind to do a *magnum opus* and started in on a canvas of nearly twice the size. The result was that it could be hung nowhere in Mr. Graham's house unless on the stairway. This ignominious position did not suit Rossetti, and he reclaimed it, to replace it with the smaller version. The original became a white elephant on his hands, and when it

was finally disposed of he had been paid for it three times over, twice getting it back in exchange for its equivalent in smaller work.

Among the pictures of 1877 was the *Magdalen*, now owned by Mr. Bancroft, in which the most winning qualities of Rossetti's final style are displayed. Like the *Lady Lilith* it is painted from Miss Wilding, but there is no occult suggestion in the sweet almost childish face, with its tender, full lips, not firmly enough modelled for beauty, its innocent, meditative eyes, its smooth young oval, its surrounding glory of bright hair. It has been painted obviously with a slow vehicle, and one might almost surmise with a slow hand. There is no vivacity of touch or freshness of colour. The effect is even a little turbid, but the richness and unity of the tone and the loveliness of the type are compensations to silence all fault-finding. Unfortunately the reproduction in this book fails, owing to the ridgy quality of the paint, to give the peculiar gracious beauty of the hands as they are rendered in the original.

In this year 1877 we find Rossetti again away from Chelsea, and in a very low condition of health. Since his return from Kelmscott he had twice left town, once at the end of 1875 for a stay of several months at Bognor, where he rented a place called Aldwick Lodge near "the roughest bit of beach on the Sussex coast"; and again in the summer of 1876 for a visit at Broadlands, Hampshire, the home of Lord and Lady Mount-Temple, where he met a Mrs.

Sumner who became an attached friend, and who sat, the tallest and stateliest of his various tall and stately types, for his unfinished picture, the *Domizia Scaligera*.

The next summer he was ill from an organic disturbance to which he was subject and which rendered an operation necessary. From the nervous strain thus laid upon him he was slow in reviving, due in part to the subjugation of his system to chloral of which he continued to take heavy doses. In August he went with Madox Brown and a hired nurse to Herne Bay for the very essential change of air and scene. Brown gives an amusing account of their difficulties in finding suitable lodgings, and it may well be imagined that Rossetti was not a very pliable tenant.

"Our first landlady," Brown writes, "proved a vixen and we had to decamp, sacrificing a week's rent. But there was no help for it, for the house was small and her tongue resounded all over it. She was indignant at our having baths. She was indignant at our late dinners. She was indignant at our wish to shut in the sound of her children's voices. She was most of all indignant at eggs being poached and macaroni eaten. We found this pretty house and left. D. G. is really better since, and walks and talks of painting again." "This pretty house" was a little removed from Herne Bay proper, at Hunter's Forestall, and here Rossetti was joined by Mr. Watts-Dunton and by his mother and Christina.

His talk of painting again led to no result for some time, and his improvement in health was much retarded by the extreme depression of his spirits. "The absolute lack of occupation is rotting my life away, hour by hour," he had written home, shortly after his arrival. His companions vied with one another to lift his melancholy and spur him toward his old pursuits, and Mr. Watts-Dunton has given a detailed account of the way in which the latter was finally accomplished. Rossetti, he says, was undoubtedly very weak, "but not nearly so weak as his vivid imagination declared him to be. He was convinced that he would never be able to paint again, and consequently, the moment he touched the brush, his hand shook as with the palsy, and the brush fell from his fingers. Many an anxious conference we had as to the best means of grappling with this all-powerful imagination. An accident disclosed the lines on which we could work. We got talking about W. B. Scott and his absolute baldness, which extended not only to the head, but to the eyebrows and the eyelashes—the result, I believe, of some aggravated form of dyspepsia. Rossetti said that he had seen him without his wig, and tried to describe the phenomenon. I said, 'Sketch Scotus's bald pate for us.' He went to the easel and made the sketch rapidly and perfectly. Of course we made no comment upon the fact of his powers of work being suddenly restored. But the next day Christina was seized by a burning desire to have her mother's

portrait drawn in chalk. Simultaneously Mrs. Rossetti was seized by a burning desire to possess a portrait of Christina in chalk. When Rossetti declared that he could not even hold a piece of chalk, Scotus's bald pate was pointed to. The result of the little plot was a very successful chalk portrait-group, life-size, of Christina and her mother, head and shoulders." This was followed by other portraits of Christina, and Rossetti's emancipation from the imaginative part of his weakness was complete. The rule of Rossetti's imagination over his physical sensations has elsewhere been emphasised by this same friend, whose opportunities for observing it were unrivalled. Some of his remarks have therefore a value above those of any other writer about Rossetti and may well be quoted literally to convey the precise impression produced upon him. Rossetti, he says, "was the slave of his own imagination—an imagination of a power and vividness such as I have never seen equalled. Of its vividness, no artistic expression of his can give any notion. He had not the smallest command over it. And let it not be supposed that this was a slight affliction: nor let anyone think less of Rossetti because, having lost the governance of the most powerful of all the human faculties, he suffered much misery. . . . It is asserted that a drop of cold water will scald, if the person upon whose flesh it falls really imagines it to be boiling. And I believe it: I feel certain that Rossetti could have been so scalded. Like fire the

imagination is a good servant but a bad master. This I say was Rossetti's curse, that like Professor Tyndall's 'sensitive flame,' which rises and falls to the tiny sounds of a tuning-fork or the rustle of a dress, or the plashing of a rain-drop, the tremulous flame of his soul was disturbed by every breath.

"To tell him anything of a specially pathetic or tragic nature was cruel, so vividly did he realise every situation. A friend of his used to amuse him, when strolling by the Thames at Kelmscott, by telling him anecdotes and stories gathered from out-of-the-way books, or else invented for the occasion. So powerful (that is to say, so childlike) was Rossetti's imagination, so entirely did it dominate an intellect of unusual subtlety, that these stories interested him just as much as real adventures, and, though he knew them to be gossamer fictions woven at the moment of telling, he would be as much affected by an unhappy catastrophe as though they had been incidents of real life, and would sometimes beg for the catastrophe to be altered. He was an idealist, I say, if ever there was one; he paid the penalty for living in the idealist's world of beautiful dreams, if ever that penalty was paid by man."

It is by mere chance that we know more of Rossetti the thinker during the last few years of his life than at any other stage of his development. In 1878 Mr. Hall Caine sent him the copy of a lecture on his poetry delivered the year before, and thus began a correspondence in which many of his opinions upon

literature, especially upon poetry, find expression, his readiness to aid a much younger writer leading him to discussion of technical points in addition to ordinary statement of literary sympathies. He obviously was not a critic in any extended sense, Mr. Caine observes, but "you might always distrust your judgment," he adds, "if you found it at variance with his where abstract power and beauty were concerned." On Wordsworth, whose faults were of the kind to impress him deeply, he utters one or two sagacious judgments. "No one regards the great Ode," he says, "with more special and unique homage than I do, as a thing absolutely alone of its kind among all greatest things." But he could not say that anything else by Wordsworth seemed on a level with it. "A reticence almost invariably present is fatal in my eyes to the highest pretensions on behalf of his sonnets," he adds elsewhere. "Reticence is but a poor sort of muse, nor is tentativeness (so often to be traced in his work) a good accompaniment in music. Take the sonnet on *Toussaint L'Ouverture* (in my opinion his noblest, and very noble indeed) and study (from Main's note) the lame and fumbling changes made in various editions of the early lines which remain lame in the end. . . . Primary vital impulse was surely not fully developed in his muse." Primary vital impulse was with Rossetti the first essential of poetry. "You have much too great a habit of speaking of a special octave, sestette, or line," he warns his correspondent,

"Conception, my boy, Fundamental Brainwork, that is what makes the difference in all art. Work your metal as much as you like, but first take care that it is gold and worth working. A Shakespearian sonnet is better than the most perfect in form, because Shakespeare wrote it."

Despite his care for form in his own work he had no sympathy whatever with formality. "It would not be at all found," he says, "that my best sonnets are always in the mere form which I think the best. The question with me is regulated by what I have to say."

He prided himself on keeping his verse up to his own standard: "If I have a distinction as a sonnet writer it is that I never admit a sonnet that is not fully on the level of every other." For indiscriminate publishing he had a vast contempt. Of Keats he says that he hardly died so much too early, and not at all too early had there been any danger of his "taking to the modern habit eventually — treating material as product and shooting it all out as it comes"; but he would not have thought a longer career thrown away upon him if he had continued to the age of anything to give joy. "Nor would he ever have done any 'good' at all," he adds, with relish. "Shelley did good, and perhaps some harm with it. Keats' joy was after all a flawless gift."

In his praise of Coleridge, he was naturally enthusiastic, in a sense recognising his "master." "You can never say too much about Coleridge for

me," he wrote, "for I worship him on the right side of idolatry," but the worship was confined to the poetry: the philosophy was an unread book to him. "I doubt," says Mr. Caine, "if Rossetti quite knew what was meant by 'Coleridge's system' as it was so frequently called, and I know that he could not be induced to so much as look at the *Biographia Literaria,* though once he listened whilst I read a chapter from it."

He was a great denouncer of the prose style in poetry, a sentiment probably at the source of his antagonism to Wordsworth, but he had no patience with unusual or curious words, and firmly took his correspondent to task for using them.

"I am sure," he says, "I could write one hundred essays, on all possible subjects, without once experiencing the 'aching void' which is filled by such words as 'mythopœic' and 'anthropomorphism.' I do not find life long enough to know in the least what they mean. They are both very long and very ugly indeed, the latter only suggesting to me a Vampire or Somnambulant Cannibal. (To speak rationally, would not 'man-evolved Godhead' be an English equivalent?)[1] 'eheumeristic' also found me somewhat on my beam-ends though explanation is here given; yet I felt I could do without 'eheumerous' and you perhaps without the 'humerous.' You can pardon me now; for so bad

[1] An excellent proof of the truth of his declaration that he "does not know in the least" what the word means.

a pun places me at your mercy indeed. But seriously, simple English in prose writing and in all narrative poetry (however monumental language may become in abstract verse) seems to me a treasure not to be foregone in favour of German innovations."

For Chatterton he had a late-blossoming enthusiasm. He owned his works in 1848, but it was thirty years after that he began to make a special study of him, and then he wrote: "Not to know Chatterton is to be ignorant of the *true* dayspring of romantic poetry." Someone said that Oliver Madox Brown had "genius enough to stock a good few Chattertons," which drew from him a scornful tirade against comparing the genius of one age and environment with the genius of another. Oliver, he said, was the product of the most teeming hotbeds of art and literature. "What he would have been if, like the ardent and heroic Chatterton, he had had to fight a single-handed battle for art and bread together against merciless mediocrity in high places — what he would then have become, I cannot in the least calculate, but we know what Chatterton became."

In politics, as by this time we have seen, Rossetti was no champion. He says that he never read a parliamentary debate in his life. Early in his youth he wrote an indignant little sonnet, *On the Refusal of Aid between Nations*, in reference to the apathy with which other countries regarded the struggles of Italy and Hungary against Austria; and occasional

sonnets written later, together with a few which he said he had written but had not printed, and which "would not prove him a Tory," show him temporarily stirred by phases of public life; but he had no real sympathy with political questions as such. "He had ideas," his brother says, "and applied them to national as well as other problems; but he paid no attention at all to the hourly and yearly scuffle over questions of practical legislation and administration, whether in this country or in others."

"You must simply view me as a nonentity in any practical relation to such matters," he replied, when Mr. Caine asked permission to dedicate to him his essay on the relation of politics to art. In the essay it was urged that as great artists in the past had participated in political struggles, they should not now hold aloof from controversies immediately concerning them. This was not at all Rossetti's idea. He pointed out that even Michelangelo, patriot and hero as he was, "when he had done all that he thought became him, retired to a certain trackless and forgotten tower and there stayed in some sort of peace (though much in request) till he could lead his own life again," and on one occasion did not hesitate to betake himself to Venice as a refuge. To paint in a trackless and forgotten tower would have been much to Rossetti's taste, but he repudiated sharply enough the idea advanced by Mr. Caine in his essay that to certain minds the preservation of such a pitiful possession

as the poetical remains of Cecco Angiolieri seemed more important than to secure the unity of a great nation. He could not conceive such an individual and thought the passage would be much better modified to "a thing of some moment even while the contest is waging for the political unity of a great nation."

In this correspondence Rossetti's own poetry was frequently discussed and with a zest almost boyish in its expression. The references to his emendations are full of interest in their suggestion of the hold taken upon him by his poems, and the importance he attached to each alteration. "The next point I have marked in your letter," he writes on one impressive occasion, "is that about the additions to *Sister Helen*. Of course I knew that your hair must arise from your scalp in protest. But what should you say if Keith of Ewern were a three-days' bridegroom — if the spell had begun on the wedding-morning — and if the bride herself became the last pleader for mercy? I fancy you will see your way now. The culminating, irresistible provocation helps, I think, to humanise Helen, besides lifting the tragedy to a yet sterner height."

It was quite a habit with him, after explaining such changes in his work or showing any new poem to his friends, to warn them against letting the public get wind of the matter. He wanted everything he printed to strike fresh upon his readers, and for this reason seldom let any of his poems go to peri-

odicals; keeping them almost as jealously as he kept his pictures.

His intimacy with Mr. Caine and Mr. Watts-Dunton was undoubtedly the influence that spurred him on to new efforts in poetry during the last three or four years of his life. The latter was untiring in his zeal to rescue Rossetti's great gifts from the obscurity that threatened him. When he laid down his pen, as when he laid down his brush, this most untiring of friends stimulated, cajoled, and finally coerced him until the brain resumed its natural function and the imagination began to play about safer themes than his personal experiences and sufferings. Thus after a long lapse and at a time when gloomy forebodings were uppermost in his mind he was persuaded with infinite difficulty to try his hand at a sonnet. The outcome was of no value, but truth was sacrificed to policy, and his companion lavished praise upon it until more sonnets were written and the old dexterity was regained. Again, he was challenged to write a ballad in the simple, direct style of the ballad proper, and *The White Ship* and *The King's Tragedy* resulted. The former, written in 1880, is the dramatic story of the death at sea of Henry the First's son and shows no sign of diminishing vigour. Berold the butcher, the one survivor of the wreck, tells the story, and the language is sturdy and lucid enough. The character of the young Prince is concisely indicated and its one redeeming trait of heroism is finely conceived and rendered:

He was a prince of lust and pride ;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be King, he oft would vow,
He 'd yoke the peasant to his own plow.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

In constructing this ballad Rossetti showed all his customary care in perfecting details : every point in his treatment of the subject, he said, even down to the incident of "the fair boy dressed in black" who announced to the King the news of his son's death, was derived from the ancient chroniclers. He sent his manuscript to Madox Brown for criticism and received some nautical hints which he needed, "being one of those men to whom such words as sea, ship, and boat are generic terms."

The King's Tragedy, completed just a year before his death, is founded upon the tradition that Catherine Douglas received her popular name "Barlass" from having barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James the First of Scots. It begins with the free ballad swing, and reaches the romantic height, though lacking the flexible spontaneity of the best of the old ballad literature. Mr. Watts-Dunton finds those portions of it the finest which deal with the supernatural, but they are closely pressed by the dramatic passage describing the finding of the King, and by the splendid stanzas picturing the Scottish sea under the rising moon :

That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
'Neath a toilsome moon half seen ;
The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high ;
And where there was a line of the sky
Wild wings loomed dark between.

. . . . . .

'T was then the moon sailed clear of the rack
On high in her hollow dome ;
And still as aloft with heavy crest
Each clamorous wave rang home,
Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed
Amid the champing foam.

With these two ballads and a third (*Rose Mary,* written immediately after the publication of his first volume) and a number of new sonnets, Rossetti decided that he had enough material for another volume. This he got out in 1881 under the name *Ballads and Sonnets,* transferring to it the now completed *House of Life.* At the same time he reissued the *Poems,* filling up the gap left by the removal of *The House of Life* chiefly by inserting the early and unfinished poem, *The Bride's Prelude.*

In two months' time he had realised from the royalty on these two volumes over thirteen hundred dollars, and they were favourably received by the critics, but the fire of life was sinking very fast in Rossetti, and he was almost indifferent now to the fate of his work. To use his brother's words : "Not for the applause of a big or a little crowd had he worked all his life long, rather for adequate self-expression and attainment in art. The work was done, but — except in a remote or abstracted sense

—it did not prove to be its own exceeding great reward."

His mind turned to new projects, however, among them an historical ballad on *Joan of Arc* (also the subject of the last picture on which he painted), for which he had transcripts and abstracts made from documents in the British Museum; and a ballad on *The Death of Abraham Lincoln* in which he intended to include a tribute to John Brown. These were not carried out, and the last poetry he actually produced was, characteristically enough, a ballad conceived many years before, embodying an eccentric story of a Dutchman's wager to smoke against the devil, and two sonnets dictated from his death-bed on his own design *The Sphinx*.

He had grown gradually weaker in body and more and more variable in mood, and those who knew him only during these later years remember periods of terrible depression against which he would struggle manfully, and spasms of morbid suspicion in which his oldest and truest friends were charged with grave disloyalty to him. His native resolution had waned in small matters so much that Mr. Caine, becoming his housemate in 1881, found him devoid of it, and also "destitute of cheerfulness and content." He was doubtless an unmanageable companion, filled as he was with imaginings, and nervous at times to the point of frenzy, but his outbursts had always their corresponding reactions in which he was pathetically eager to atone. "I wish you were indeed my son,"

he said to Mr. Caine on one of these occasions, "for though then I should still have no right to address you so, I should at least have some right to expect your forgiveness." He kept to the end his capacity to attach people to him with extraordinary intensity of affection. The young blind poet, Philip Bourke Marston, who knew and loved him in the decline of his life, expressed this in the language of youthful romanticism when he wrote to a young friend: "What a supreme man is Rossetti! Why is he not some great exiled king, that we might give our lives in trying to restore him to his kingdom!"

He was something very like an exiled king during the four years that he shut himself within the walls of his Chelsea garden, or held his limited court in the studio, and more than one of his friends gave a liberal share of life in the vain effort to restore him to his kingdom. But he could still be royal company at times, and show in his gracious manner and quick sympathy that he was the Rossetti of his most propitious period. Mr. Sharp tells us of evenings spent with him that began in the depths of fathomless despair, by dinnertime reached shallower seas of despondency, and between the hours of ten and three rose to a high tide of cheerfulness. Then, he says, "many a jest and hearty laugh, keen criticism and pungent remark, recondite reminiscence and poetic quotation, would make the lurking blue devils depart altogether from the studio—to await their victim when, in the sleepless morning-hours, he should be

alone once more with his sufferings and unquiet thoughts."

His relations with his family, always affectionate, grew closer than ever as his need deepened. "It makes life less bleak as it advances," he writes to Christina, "to find the old care and love still prompt to hand." With his mother he was uniformly tender and considerate. However he might confide his misery to his intimates, and reticence was not his quality, to her he presented a brave face and a loving one. In the society of his friends he took pleasure, dreading nothing so much as loneliness; but meeting with strangers was an ordeal that more and more grew impossible to him. Even after his long correspondence with Mr. Caine and repeated invitations to him to visit Cheyne Walk, the first suggestion toward carrying out such a plan brought about the utmost agitation. Mr. Caine describes the preliminaries in the following words:

"By return of the post that bore him my missive came two letters, the one obviously written and posted within an hour or two of the other. In the first of these he expressed courteously his pleasure at the prospect of seeing me, and appointed 8.30 P.M. the following evening as his dinner hour at his house in Cheyne Walk. The second letter begged me to come at 5.30 or 6 P.M., so that we might have a long evening. 'You will, I repeat,' he says, 'recognise the hole-and-cornerest of all existences in this big barn of mine; but come early and I shall read you some

ballads and we can talk of many things.' An hour later than the arrival of these letters came a third epistle, which ran: 'Of course when I speak of your dining with me, I mean tête-a-tête and without ceremony of any kind. I usually dine in my studio and in my painting coat!' I had before me a five-hours' journey to London, so that in order to reach Chelsea at 6 P.M. I must needs set out at midday, but oblivious of this necessity, Rossetti had actually posted a fourth letter on the morning of the day on which we were to meet, begging me not on any account to talk, in the course of our interview, of a certain personal matter upon which we had corresponded. This fourth and final message came to hand the morning after the meeting, when I had the satisfaction to reflect that (owing more perhaps to the plethora of other subjects of interest than to any suspicion of its being tabooed) I had luckily eschewed the proscribed topic."

On the occasion of this first meeting Mr. Caine saw a man who looked to him ten years older than his actual age, which was then fifty-two, with a pale face and heavy moustache and beard streaked with grey. He wore spectacles, and, in reading, a second pair over the first, "but these took little from the sense of power conveyed by those steady eyes and that 'bar of Michelangelo.'" He was negligently dressed, and wore a straight sack coat of his own designing, "buttoned at the throat, descending at least to the knees, and having large pockets cut into

it perpendicularly at the sides." The black, tumbling hair had grown thin, and the forehead showed the plainer its nobility of structure. His voice had lost nothing of its richness and compass and "had every gradation of tone at command" for the readings and recitations which now as in his youth gave him the keenest enjoyment. This is the last glimpse we get of Rossetti before his appearance changed to that of an invalid for whom there is no recovery.

In September, 1881, shortly after Mr. Caine took up his residence with Rossetti, the two went together to the Vale of St. John in the mountains of Cumberland, where they stayed a month. It was the last trip from which Rossetti was to return, and as he re-entered his Cheyne Walk house, much feebler than when he left it, he uttered the words: "Thank God! home at last, and never shall I leave it again!" Early in December he was stricken with a numbness resembling paralysis, and chloral, of which he had been taking enormous doses,[1] was cut off entirely, never to be resumed. After an interval of great suffering and delirium, he awoke "calm in body, and clear in mind, and grateful in heart." His delusions were chiefly over, and he appeared to the small circle of his devoted friends a changed man. But in all ways he was weaker and his physical condition went from bad to worse. On the fourth of February,

[1] The amount has been estimated at 180 grains a night; but owing to the skill of his house companions in diluting the drug it was probably considerably less at the utmost.

1882, he went with Mr. Caine and his little sister (a girl of thirteen) to Birchington-by-the-Sea, where he occupied a bungalow that was placed at his disposal by his old friend, John P. Seddon.

On the journey he was affectionate and gentle with the child, who thought she had never met a man so full of interesting and attractive ideas, and during her stay at the bungalow he was continually thoughtful of her entertainment. In March his mother, not far from eighty-two years of age, and Christina, went down to Birchington. Expecting them, Rossetti sent for a chair the twin of the one his mother used at home, thus completing the long series of his loving attentions to her. His brother William, Mr. Shields, Mr. Watts-Dunton, Mr. Leyland, and Mr. Sharp were also there from time to time up to the last. Rossetti's dejection increased with his infirmity, but even at this eleventh hour there were rallyings to cheerfulness and interest in the external world. Mr. Sharp recalls one lovely day when he and Rossetti stood on the cliffs looking seaward. In reply to his comment on the beauty of the scene, Rossetti said with feeling: "It *is* beautiful—the world, and life itself. I am glad I have lived."

In a letter written a week before his death he is eagerly praising the work of the French painter, Gustave Moreau, of which an example had been sent him. He read and had read to him at Birchington, a number of novels, among them Dickens's *Tale of*

Two Cities, and was interested in the reviews of Mr. Caine's book of collected sonnets which had just been published. He painted fitfully on a replica of the *Joan of Arc*, improving it, Miss Caine recalls, "with every touch." Thus mustering his faculties, he retained the semblance, at least, of his old distinctive individuality until within a few days of the end, which came on Easter Sunday, the ninth of April, 1882.

After his death Mr. Shields made a drawing of his face in its unfamiliar repose, and a cast of his head was taken. On the fourteenth of April the simple funeral took place, attended by a score or so of friends, and all that was left of Rossetti was laid in the Birchington churchyard, within sound of "the sea's listless chime." There a tombstone was designed for him by Madox Brown, and before his house in Cheyne Walk is a bronze bust by the same loyal hand, surmounting a fountain designed by John Seddon. This second memorial was erected by subscription, and was essentially a labour of love on the part of Madox Brown, who wrote after the friend of more than thirty years was lost to him:

"I cannot make out how things are to go on, in so many directions things must be changed."

CHAPTER X.

CHARACTER AND TEMPERAMENT.

"IN many phases of outward nature," said Rossetti in his reply to Robert Buchanan's article on his poetry, "the principle of chaff and grains holds good,—the base enveloping the precious continually; but an untruth was never yet the husk of a truth." Certainly the husk that lay about Rossetti's finer qualities was not that of untruth in any of its forms. "Nothing in him stands clearer to my mind," says his brother, "than his total freedom from pretence." Many a time he forged from this high quality a weapon for others to wound him. His eager and outspoken temper made the management of life difficult for him. He could not understand in others any lack of the generosity so natural to himself, or any hesitation in upholding the cause of a friend. He was chivalrous to the point of Quixotry in pushing the claims of others, and ready to accept from those he loved what he as readily would give. Things pitiful touched him, things brave stirred him, things beautiful inspired

him. In many ways he was selfish; he was certainly a spendthrift; he was often unreasonable and illogical in his demands upon the world; he did some indefensible things, but no other human being could have done them with so little consciousness of evil, with such terrible simplicity of intention. He seems seldom to have felt the bracing sense of duty even toward his art, following his own will wherever it led him. Fortunately, however, it led him for the most part toward kind acts, robust industry, deep sympathies, and a dignified attitude toward life. "As the years rolled on," his brother reflects concerning him, "what he ought to do was very often what he chose and liked to do." He despised anything like rivalry or professional jealousy, and his ability to sell his pictures with judgment and to advantage was untainted by any grasping instinct. He much resented a personal slight and showed in his later years undue susceptibility, but where he found loyalty he repaid it loyally, and was never weary of disclosing the best qualities of his friends to those who knew them less intimately than he. Much of the mental suffering that marked the close of his life was due to his self-torment for the errors of his faulty but not ignoble career. The key-note of his ethical creed seems to have been never to treat any great emotion or conviction trivially. He rushed headlong into many wayward experiences, but it could not be said of him that he was ever irreverent toward the nobler impulses of the mind and soul.

Much has been made of the assertion that he could not keep his friends and it is true that many dropped away from him, but his demand upon friendship was exacting, and he could count to the very end an extraordinary number of those who were willing to sacrifice their other interests to serve him and bear him company, and who found it well worth their while to undergo his tempestuous moods for the reward of his winning and affectionate companionship, and the stimulus of his talk. Some of the breaks that occurred between him and the men who were at first attracted to him were due to their own lack of indulgence toward a nature that could not conform itself to the ordinary standards. Finding him so full of nobility at certain points, so open of heart and generous of speech, they seem not unnaturally to have expected a consistency of attitude and act which he could not compass and a departure from which they could not brook. In one or two cases they failed to maintain the reticence their intimacy with him ought to have imposed, and he, becoming aware of it, would have no more of them. A couple of stanzas from his poem *Soothsay*, written in 1881, show him reflecting upon this aspect of human relations.

> Let thy soul strive that still the same
> Be early friendship's sacred flame.
> The affinities have strongest part
> In youth, and draw men heart to heart:
> As life wears on and finds no rest,
> The individual in each breast
> Is tyrannous to sunder them.

MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN TO DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

Designed by John P. Seddon, Architect.
(Bust of Rossetti by Ford Madox Brown.)

In the life-drama's stern cue-call,
A friend 's a part well-prized by all :
And if thou meet an enemy,
What art thou that none such should be ?
Even so : but if the two parts run
Into each other and grow one,
Then comes the curtain's cue to fall.

That he was not stubborn to hold out against reconciliation the history of a disagreement with Madox Brown gives evidence. Brown, displeased, had withdrawn himself from Rossetti's society for a considerable time. Then he wrote suggesting a renewal of intercourse. Rossetti's reply was characteristic in its warm simplicity : "You would of course have been most welcome all along, and will be simply the same now. . . . I am very glad you have written and never loved you better than I do now, as I said to Watts before we went to bed last night."

Many of Rossetti's difficulties arose from a want of consideration, but it should not be forgotten that from his childhood he had cherished imaginative thoughts and feelings that made him, as Mr. Caine has said, an anachronism in the nineteenth century, and, despite his cordial, welcoming manner, essentially out of touch with most of the people by whom he was surrounded. No account of him could be so misleading as one that should drag down quite to the commonplace that curious, unworldly, unbalanced, wholly loving, and inspiring personality.

"He was a man," says his most understanding

friend and critic, Watts-Dunton, "whom it was impossible to know without deeply loving, and I will not deny that it was necessary that he should be deeply loved before he could be fully known."

Rossetti the painter and Rossetti the poet were much at one with Rossetti the man. He lived in his studio, and not, as many artists of his own day, in a world outside of it, going to it as to a counting-house for the working hours. Nevertheless he put into his pictures, and into his poems as well, only a partial suggestion of himself. If we should look to them alone for biographical material we should find a fair support for the theory long current, that their author was a being of abnormal sensibilities who had from the beginning of his career held himself aloof in an atmosphere of visions and pensive interests, not to be associated with people of lusty tastes; leading a life of artificial æsthetic culture, and a proper target for the gibes of men and women preoccupied with solid reality. We get from them not a trace of the exuberant animal spirits, the decision of manner, the fearless, positive utterance, the quickness of intellectual perception, the bluff aversion to anything approaching sentimentality of phrase or attitude, by which he was characterised the greater part of his life. What we do get from them is a combination of the qualities least in evidence to the casual eye in his personality, —the romantic temper which sees even in common events the essential and underlying mystery, the passion for beauty in the human face and in the colour

and texture of flowers and stuffs and ornaments, the overpowering sense of the beauty and holiness of human affections, the profound conviction that personal happiness is only to be achieved through these affections.

This absorption in his personal feelings united to his imaginative power resulted in work of a very narrow range but of intense significance. One of his housemates has said that he was "somewhat *borné* in his interests both on canvas and in verse," and unwilling to care for "certain forms of literature and life which he admitted were worth caring for." That he did not try to care for those forms to which he was naturally indifferent is one of the chief sources of his artistic strength. His efforts would have been fruitless and could only have drawn from his power of self-expression. His entire sincerity preserved him both from formality and from affected originality, and fortified his prodigious imagination as no conformity to a general standard could possibly have done. He detested systems, political, social, and artistic, and he let them alone. In the letter to Mr. Caine on the relation of artists to politics he recognises his utter inability to stand in any practical relation to such matters of general importance:

"For all I might desire in the direction spoken of," he says, "volition is vain without vocation; and I had better really stick to knowing how to mix vermilion and ultramarine for a flesh-grey, and how to manage their equivalents in verse. To speak with-

out sparing myself,—my mind is a childish one, if to be isolated in Art is child's-play : at any rate I feel that I do not attain to the more active and practical of the mental functions of manhood. I can say this to you because I know you will make the best and not the worst of me, and better than such feasible best I do not wish to appear."

His consideration of pigments and of words used as pigments was not the kind of consideration employed by the painter who chooses the forms best suited to a large and liberal or to a small and fastidious brush, or the colours that seem to him best to represent a dark or creamy skin, and by the poet whose desire is chiefly to express his thought in musical metres. More than one of his critics has discovered his tendency to place a double load on each of his vehicles of expression in turn : to make sumptuously coloured pictures of his poems, and of his pictures romantic and eloquent poems, but no one has made his mental processes so clear as Mr. Watts-Dunton in his article, *The Truth about Rossetti*. Of all who know him as a colourist of superb endowment there is but a small proportion who see in his choice of types more than an individual and inexplicable taste for sad eyes and long necks and large arms and full lips and thin cheeks. But in this choice, as we have seen, an elaborate scheme of symbolism was involved, and applied to nearly all of his later pictures.

"Every feature had its suggestive value. To

him the mouth really represented the sensuous part of the face no less certainly than the eyes represented the spiritual part; and if, in certain heads, the sensuous fulness of the lips became scarcely Caucasian, this was a necessary correction to eyes which became on their part over-mystical in their spirituality."

In his poetry we get a corresponding lack of simplicity and a passion for the details that render the greatest possible suggestion and association. The value of each word as an interpreter of esoteric meaning is weighed, and he had the zest of Flaubert in seeking the unique epithet to express his idea with more than Flaubert's subtlety of sense. Walter Pater, the most competent of critics in this sort, emphasises the sincerity prompting him to this ornateness, as it prompted him to most of the results he achieved either in life or in art. "His own meaning," he says, "was always personal and even recondite, in a certain sense learned and casuistical, sometimes complex or obscure; but the term was always, one could see, deliberately chosen from many competitors, as the just transcript of that peculiar phase of soul which he alone knew, precisely as he knew it."

In his sonnets his wealth of imagery is most striking, and to many minds obstructive. Mr. Watts-Dunton compares their language in its interlaced fabric of metaphors to "a lovely gauze behind which the thought is seen iridescent and alive like a

fish in a net," and sometimes the fish is rather small and unimportant to be detained by a net of such elaborate construction. His mastery of the sonnet-form, however, is so complete, and his skill in carving it to his own idea "in ivory or in ebony, as Day or Night may rule," so consummate, that he makes on the whole for delight in this form of poetry as in others. Mr. Caine has found him the first English writer to obey, throughout a series of sonnets, the canon of the contemporary structure requiring that a sonnet shall present the twofold facet of a single thought or emotion. It is surprising to find him punctilious in his observance of this most restrictive poetic form when he so persistently refused to conform in painting to the severer models of that art, and Mr. Caine traces his technical proficiency to the early training which taught him poetry as he best liked to be taught, in the form of a game. To those "*bouts-rimés*" in which the little Rossettis found an escape from the tediousness of school duties we probably owe the two most perfectly constructed series of sonnets the century has produced, — Dante Gabriel's *House of Life* and Christina's *Monna Innominata*.

Despite Rossetti's care in revising his work and his patient zeal in perfecting it, his fault is that which usually belongs to the hasty worker, — superfluity. In his little note-book of maxims he has noted that moderation is the highest law of poetry, but no one could oftener forget to apply this law.

Given a beautiful subject, the inexhaustible subject of life, for example, he is at a loss to understand why he should not talk about it unrestrainedly, and much more unrestrainedly than "the modest Saxon point of view," as Mr. James calls it in referring to De Musset's similar tendency, can justify. The lack of reticence we find in his sentiment extends to his manner, and he is not guiltless even of the worst indulgence of the naturally garrulous temperament: of saying discursively what should be said tersely, or at least with the utmost simplicity. While he respects the limitations of the sonnet with the respect of a true artist, he deliberately crowds within those limits every figure of speech that he can call up from his full mind. This is the side of his poetic art which it is easy to attack. But the reason is that he was an Italian writing in English. Even Dante, "the cast-iron man," says Lowell, grows "pliable as a field of grain at the breath of Beatrice, and flows away in waves of sunshine." It would be unintelligent indeed to expect of Rossetti, who derived from the same expansive nation and was anything else than a cast-iron man, the taste and the method of a Milton. To himself he seemed to have exercised the utmost control and to have condensed his work to rather an astonishing degree. "Probably the man does not live," he said to Mr. Caine, "who could write what I have written more briefly than I have done." Of individual poems this is true, and where it is not true,—where

he amplifies and teases his metaphors to the verge of obscurity,—he constantly introduces exquisite single fancies that reconcile the mind and bewitch the imagination. Such images as these lines convey :

> Each hour until we meet is as a bird
> That wings from far his gradual way along
> The rustling covert of my soul ;

or these :

> The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
> Like any hill-flower,

compensate a reader for the fluency that occasionally palls.

It is not, however, any particular characteristic of his style in painting or in poetry that makes Rossetti so important a figure among his contemporaries. It is what Mr. Watts-Dunton calls his "vision," his power of always seeing beneath the prosaic aspect of things and confronting us with realities that are hidden to the common sight. "A sustained impressibility towards the mysterious conditions of man's every-day life, towards the very mystery itself in it," says Pater, "gives a singular gravity to all his work ; these matters never became trite to him." They have become trite to most of us, and we have certainly to thank him for affording us one glimpse at this late time of a spirit that languishes in the same environment with science and civilisation. He quoted with appreciation the saying of Keats : "I value more the privilege of seeing great things

in loneliness than the fame of a prophet." And with still greater zest he recounts the anecdote of Keats's proposing as a toast, "Confusion to the memory of Newton!" On Wordsworth's wishing to know *why* before he drank it, the reply was, "Because he destroyed the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to a prism." "That is magnificent!" he comments. And Rossetti also is magnificent because in his soul, "that vexed island hung between the upper and nether world and liable to incursions from both," his imagination never grew dim and his interest in human affections never flagged, from the beginning to the end.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

THE first mention we find of Christina Rossetti in the family letters of her brother, Dante Gabriel, shows her a poet of twelve, contributing to one of the magazines edited by the young Rossettis two poems, in Dante's opinion "very good" and according to the later judgment of her brother William, indisputably bad. Beyond such fragmentary glimpses of a thoughtful little girl, "not precocious," somewhat irritable, worshipping animals, reading little and only what hit her fancy, but knowing Keats at nine, and following the family occupations of verse-making and drawing, we see nothing of her until at eighteen she is posing for the Virgin in Rossetti's first picture. She was then of slight figure, with regular, serious features, lovely eyes, and an extraordinary expression of pensive sweetness. Her manner was characterised by a certain reserve and hauteur which, according to one of her friends, gave her an air of doing everything "from self-respect, not from fellow-feeling with

others, or from kindly consideration for them." Her health was delicate, and for some years her family believed her destined to an early death. A decided tendency to melancholy marked her temperament and her early poems are extravagantly gloomy. She was also very shy, but charmingly, not painfully so, her trepidation in the presence of strangers taking simple and winning forms. Her amusements throughout her childhood had not been of just the sort to counteract a morbid habit of mind. She had known little of country life, her infrequent visits to her grandfather's house at Holmer Green in Buckinghamshire, about thirty miles from London, constituting her one chance to cultivate a love of trees and flowers and fields and ponds. From these she had gained something, but her principal interest in them seems to have been the same that she took in the London Zoölogical Gardens,—a vivid curiosity, that is, concerning the animal life within range. Her friendship with frogs, her sympathy with mice, her affectionate regard for caterpillars, moved her friends to astonishment long after she was a woman grown, and at twenty-eight we find her filling a letter to her brother William with news of the lizard, armadillos, wombats, porcupines, and pumas of the Gardens. This passion was entirely her own and not, as sometimes has been said, an effect of Dante Gabriel.

Landor is the one other example among the poets of England of a similar attitude toward brute creation. To him, as to the Rossettis, animals were individuals

with opinions worthy of respect and idiosyncrasies demanding attention, but with him dogs played a much more important part than they did with the Rossettis, for whom, perhaps, they had too much the self-consciousness of the human being. Christina's education was carried on at home by her capable mother, and she was of course brought up in much the same environment as Dante Gabriel. Her name "Christina" was derived from one of the Bonaparte family, Lady Dudley Stuart, and as her biographer, Mr. Mackenzie Bell, has noted, her life, uneventful as it was in personal incident, brought her constantly in touch with eminent and interesting persons. She was early trained to religious observances by her mother, and became an earnest adherent of the Church of England. At eighteen she declined an offer of marriage from a Roman Catholic on the ground of religious considerations, and this act fairly typified her course throughout her life. Her emotions, her personal desires, and even her talent became subdued to her zest for righteousness, and the plain story of her days is little more than a chronicle of her service to others. She had absolutely nothing of Dante Gabriel's belief in the necessary selfishness of those possessed of an originating gift, and frequently she let her own gift lapse in favour of duty where more persistence might perhaps eventually have made for the greater comfort of the household by increasing their very moderate means. Her first volume of poems was printed privately at Polidori's little

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

(Early sketch by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.)
From "New Poems," etc., Macmillan & Co.

printing-press when she was seventeen years old, and her next volume was the *Goblin Market, and Other Poems,* published in 1862, fifteen years later. Not until 1800 did she earn more than a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars a year from her writing.

During the most depressed period of the family fortunes she helped her mother in the management of a little day-school which was not a very successful venture. Italian was of course as familiar to her as English, but her reading seems to have been chiefly English, and not until she was eighteen did she feel the spell of Dante. As she did not lean toward scholarship she never became a very thorough student of the great Florentine, but her sentiment toward him is indicated by her wish that she too "could have done something for Dante in England," as her sister and both her brothers had done.

In her youth the characteristics of her brother Dante Gabriel and of her sister Maria seem to have met in her and struggled against each other for mastery, the latter finally gaining the upper hand; although a certain strain of strong common sense prevented her sharing Maria's ecstasy of religious devotion. Deeply admiring the spirit that prompted her sister to refrain from looking at the mummies in the British Museum "because she realised how the general Resurrection might happen 'even as she looked at those solemn corpses turned into a sight for sight-seers,'" and made her afraid to let her eyes rest on some prints from the Book of Job which

"went counter to the Second Commandment," she herself nevertheless seems free from its extremes. Setting to herself the model, however, of her sister's saintly career, she grew more and more away from the untutored caprice of Dante Gabriel, and merged her strong individuality in an ideal not colourless certainly, but not varying or complex. Maria eventually entered an Anglican convent, and Christina contented herself with living a life of almost conventual isolation, caring for her mother and for two aunts, all of whom lived to a great age and greatly required her loving attention.

For her mother she had a feeling that fell but little short of adoration. Her first little privately printed volume was dedicated to her, and later dedications ran: "To my Beloved Example, Friend, Mother," "My Mother, to whom I inscribe my Book in all Reverence and Love," "My Dear and Honoured Example," up to the final work sorrowfully inscribed to her mother's "Beloved, Revered, and Cherished Memory." Fortunately both mother and daughter were endowed with that gift of the gods, the faculty of keeping their youthfulness of spirit, and they seem to have lived together as sisters might, with similar interests and tastes. Domestic as Mrs. Rossetti was in her care for the physical comfort of her family, she was fully in sympathy with them on their intellectual side, and her opinion on niceties of expression was deferred to hardly more by Christina than by Dante Gabriel. In the matter of pronunciation, for example,

she was a recognised authority with her children, Gabriel refusing to take even Mr. Watts-Dunton's judgment against hers. In her old age she liked well to hear Christina read poetry in her clear, vibrant, bell-like voice, "the wonderful Rossetti voice" that claimed the notice of all who heard it, and Mr. Sharp remembers that his first experience of Southwell's poetry dates from his first call on the mother and daughter:

"I can still see that small and rather gloomy room," he says, "with Mrs. Rossetti sitting back, with a woollen Shetland shawl across her shoulders, and the lamplight falling on her white hair and clear-cut, ivory-hued features, as she waited with closed eyes, the better to listen; at the table, Miss Rossetti, leaning her head on her right hand, with her right elbow on the table and with her left hand turning the leaves of the book." The poem was *The Burning Babe,* and Mr. Sharp observed the curious suspiration with which the music of certain lines was prolonged, and the way in which each word was enunciated as completely and separately as notes of music slowly struck on the piano. Another friendly witness speaks of the mother as having still the remains of the noble beauty which is in all Rossetti's portraits of her, "looking a really great old woman," and remembers the gesture with which she would turn to her daughter, laying a fine old hand on hers, and saying: "My affectionate Christina." This dedication of herself to duties beautiful if not rejuvenating had the effect upon Christina of turning her

early dejection into a much more blithe and jocund temper. "I was a very melancholy girl," she once said toward the end of her life, "but now I am a very cheerful old woman."

In 1866, at the age of thirty-six, she again suffered from her deep interest in a suitor, whom she could not marry owing to her religious scruples. This incident, which involved a genuine and strong attachment, is probably responsible for what is most moving and most exquisite in her poetry. Without some such personal experience it is doubtful if she could have attained the noble passion of the *Monna Innominata* series of sonnets in which, speaking for the unknown Italian ladies preceding Beatrice and Laura, and sung by poets less conspicuous than Dante and Petrarch, she reveals the power and grace of an emotional nature veiled by the steady practice of self-abnegation. In her note to the series she says:

"In that land and in that period which gave simultaneous birth to Catholics, to Albigenses, and to Troubadours, one can imagine many a lady as sharing her lover's poetic aptitude, while the barrier between them might be one held sacred by both, yet not such as to render mutual love incompatible with mutual honour. Had such a lady spoken for herself, the portrait left us might have appeared more tender, if less dignified, than any drawn even by a devoted friend. Or had the Great Poetess of our own day and nation only been unhappy instead of happy, her circumstances would have invited her to

bequeath to us, in lieu of the *Portuguese Sonnets*, an inimitable 'donna innominata' drawn not from fancy but from feeling, and worthy to occupy a niche beside Beatrice and Laura." No intelligent reader, however, could fail to find in the grave, exalted sentiment of these sonnets, with their undercurrent of pain, a more human and living spirit than can ever exist in work based on fancy alone. The message of the eleventh sonnet is poignantly conveyed by them all, —a message of dignity and pathos:

> Even let them prate: who know not what we knew
> Of love and parting in exceeding pain,
> Of parting hopeless, here to meet again,
> Hopeless on earth, and heaven is out of view.
> But by my heart of love laid bare to you,
> My love that you cannot make void nor vain,
> Love that foregoes you but to claim anew
> Beyond this passage of the gate of death,
> I charge you at the Judgment make it plain
> My love of you was life and not a breath.

Her brother has regretted the morbid note in much of Christina's poetry and in the early poems it is sufficiently apparent, but one has only to compare such poetry as the lyric *Memory*, the sonnet *Love Lies Bleeding*, *The Twilight Night*, *Shall I Forget?* and all the sonnets of *Monna Innominata* with the poems in which her nearest approach to passive sobriety and perfectly controlled feeling is made, to realise that the union of her impetuous sorrow at the realities shadowing her impressionable soul with the capacity to suppress and regulate her actions, and ultimately her thoughts, was the spring of her rare

poetic grace, and that of the two elements her poetry could best have spared the latter. Christina's interest in the heart and soul of man entirely prevented any regret on her part that she was so largely cut off from the heart of nature. Except for eleven months of 1853–4 which were spent with her father and mother at Frome, Selwood, and a few visits to friends in country places, she was as confirmed a Londoner as Charles Lamb, and doubted whether she would really be bettered by long or frequent sojourns out of town. A friend once urged her to admit that she would be much happier in the peace and beauty of the country, but she responded by quoting Bacon's assertion that "the Souls of the Living are the Beauty of the World." Her friend, still unconvinced, asked her if she did not at least find her best inspiration in the country, but this drew forth her delightfully clear and rippling laughter, and the persistent answer that while it ought to be so, it was not; that she did not derive anything at all from the country at first hand, and that she was positively in the place that suited her best.

It is clear, however, that she somewhat exaggerated her indifference to the outdoor world. One of her critics has noted the singularity of her living out almost the whole of her life in "a city so majestic, sober, and inspiring as London," and never bringing the consciousness of streets and thoroughfares and populous murmurs into her writings. "She whose heart was so with birds and fruits, corn-fields and

farmyard sounds," he says, "never even revolts against or despairs of the huge desolation, the laborious monotony of a great town. She does not sing of the caged bird, with exotic memories of freedom stirred by the flashing water, the hanging groundsel of her wired prison, but with a wild voice, with visions only limited by the rustic conventionalities of toil and tillage. The dewy English woodland, the sharp silences of winter, the gloom of low-hung clouds, and the sigh of weeping rains are her backgrounds." She cared for nature, according to her own admission, much more than she cared for art, and when it came in her way to observe it, she memorized its phenomena to an astonishing degree. She had the habit in composition of closing her eyes and calling up her subject before her mental vision, especially its landscape setting when this was a part of her scheme, and her imagination, like Dante Gabriel's, was so vivid that she was able thus to produce a realistic impression of the most minute details of country scenery while sitting in her upper bedroom whose outlook was toward nothing more rural than the dingy walls of adjacent houses. One of the series of sonnets called *Later Life* commences:

> A host of things I take on trust; I take
> The nightingales on trust, for few and far
> Between those actual summer moments are
> When I have heard what melody they make,

and until she was forty-six or -seven years old a sunrise was one of the host of things to be taken on

trust. Then under the persuasion of Mr. Watts-Dunton's belief that a sunrise was a very different spectacle from a sunset, and that most poets derived their descriptions of the former from the latter, she decided that a sunrise she would see. Mr. Watts-Dunton thus describes the experience :

"One morning we went out just as the chilly but bewitching shiver of the dawn-breeze began to move, and the eastern sky began slowly to grow grey. Early as it was, however, many of the birds were awake, and waiting to see what we went out to see, as we knew by the twitter after twitter coming from the hedgerows. Christina was not much interested at first, but when the grey became slowly changed into a kind of apple-green crossed by bars of lilac, and then by bars of pink and gold, and, finally, when the sun rose behind a tall clump of slender elms so close together that they looked like one enormous tree, whose foliage was sufficiently thin to allow the sunbeams to pour through it as a glittering lacework of dewy leaves, she confessed that no sunset could surpass it. And when the sun, growing brighter still, and falling upon a silver sheet of mist in which the cows were lying, turned it into a sheet of gold, and made each brown patch on each cow's coat gleam like burnished copper, then she admitted that a sunrise surpassed a sunset, and was worth getting up to see. She stood and looked at it, and her lips moved out in a whisper that I could not hear." "Yet so powerful is the force of habit," he adds, "that I

greatly doubt whether Christina ever took the tróuble to see another sunrise."

In 1865 Christina Rossetti made the journey to Italy never accomplished by Dante Gabriel who was so much more an Italian than she. To her "half-Italian heart" as she called it, the appeal was strong. The "country half her own," seemed to her the loveliest of lands: "Its people is a noble people," she writes, "and its very cattle are of high-born aspect." Leaving it, she embodied her thrill of the true inimitable patriotism in the little poem *En Route*:

Farewell, land of love, Italy,
Sister-land of Paradise:
With mine own feet I have trodden thee
Have seen with mine own eyes:
I remember, thou forgettest me,
I remember thee.

Blessed be the land that warms my heart,
And the kindly clime that cheers,
And the cordial faces clear from art,
And the tongue sweet in mine ears:
Take my heart, its truest, tenderest part,
Dear land, take my tears.

From this time until 1871 Christina's life seems to have been set in paths of great serenity. In 1866 she made a visit of seven weeks at Penkill Castle where Rossetti visited two years later, and returned "well content to be at home again and take her turn at housekeeping." She went occasionally into society, and wrote a considerable number of poems. In 1866 *The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems*, with

two beautiful designs by Dante Gabriel, was brought out. In 1870 the prose volume *Commonplace and Other Short Stories* made its appearance. Dante Gabriel's verdict concerning it—that it was certainly not dangerously exciting to the nervous system—was truer than his less discouraging assurance that it was nevertheless far from being dull and would be likely to take. It did not take, and she went back for a time to the poetry which he told her was her proper business to write instead of *Commonplaces*.

In 1871 she was stricken with the terrible disease that so changed her appearance during the remaining three-and-twenty years of her life, the exophthalmic bronchocele which has for its most noticeable symptom a marked protrusion of the eyeballs.

Dante Gabriel's chalk drawing of her, made five years before, shows her face at its most attractive period, in the calmness of its maturity, before this cruel disfigurement, which to her friends was nevertheless negligible and which diminished with time. Later in life she grew stout with a certain heaviness of expression dissipated by her exquisite smile. Mr. Sharp has described her as she appeared to him at their first meeting in the early eighties:

"In some ways," he says, "she reminded me of Mrs. Craik, the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman;* that is, in the Quaker-like simplicity of her dress, and the extreme and almost demure plainness of the material, with, in her mien, something of that serene passivity which has always a charm of its own. She

was so pale as to suggest anæmia, though there was a bright and alert look in her large and expressive azure-grey eyes, a colour which often deepened to a dark, shadowy, velvety grey; and though many lines were imprinted on her features, the contours were smooth and young. Her hair, once a rich brown, now looked dark, and was thickly threaded with solitary white hairs, rather than sheaves of grey. She was about the medium height of women, though at the time I thought her considerably shorter. With all her quietude of manner and self-possession, there was a certain perturbation from this meeting with a stranger, though one so young and unknown. I noted the quick, alighting, glance, its swift withdrawal; also the restless, intermittent fingering of the long, thin, double watch-guard of linked gold which hung from below the one piece of colour she wore, a quaint, old-fashioned bow of mauve or pale purple ribbon, fastening a white frill at the neck."

Her quietness, the "drab colour" of her existence, of her manner, and of much of her later writing, is the quality that seems most to have impressed those who have written reminiscently of her, the qualities showing her kinship with Dante Gabriel's anything but drab-coloured temperament having been successfully buried. Yet, as we find her by his side whenever his own condition is more than usually perturbing—at Kelmscott, at Bognor, at Hunter's Forestall, and finally at Birchington-by-the-Sea—we feel in her devotion to him something much

more than duteous impulse and family affection. The sympathetic fire at the basis of her own heroically controlled nature seems to give her an indulgent comprehension of his, and despite their diametrically opposite ways in life the two remained in some respects alike to the end. Their memoirs show absolutely distinct types fitted to set each other off by the force of contrast, but one can hardly read the poems of both, so expressive of their inner life, without realising that Christina needed little of her boundless generosity toward those differing from her in act and opinion to help her fathom Rossetti. Many of the impulses that swayed him frequently toward his own unhappiness found their counterpart in one who could write before she was eighteen the sonnet *The Whole Head is Sick and the Whole Heart Faint.* The tendency toward symbolism that led him to read disaster in a tree felled by a storm, and see in a bird fluttering at his feet the re-incarnated spirit of his wife, appears in almost every poem she wrote. Like him she was practical on certain sides, and, like him also, lavish with worldly goods. In both the spirit struggled gallantly with the flesh, and in Christina's nature at least won the victory without dispute.

In *The Face of the Deep,* that fine failure of her last days, she writes with irresistible quaintness: "Whilst studying the devil I must take heed that my study become not devilish by reason of sympathy," but her study of what she called the devil, and

of his two companions, the world and the flesh, had given her a power to grapple with realities denied to the born ascetic. The image in her mind is seldom seen in the typical dimness of religious light, but in the full glory of the world's warm sunshine. What one of her critics has called her "fair, stern philosophy" is learned not in a guarded retreat or cloister, but on a battlefield of clashing emotions. Her penitent on the convent threshold looks earthward not to see, in the world she is leaving, dross and vanity, but to realise a pageant as fair as it might appear to the merriest reveller taking part in it :

> Milk-white, wine-flushed among the vines,
> Up and down leaping, to and fro,
> Most glad, most full, made strong with wines,
> Blooming as peaches pearled with dew,
> Their golden windy hair afloat,
> Love-music warbling in their throat,
> Young men and women come and go.

And, looking forward to the heaven she hopes by fasting and prayer to enter, the same penitent foresees no visionary Paradise of song and praise and passive peace, but the joy of earth renewed :

> There we shall meet as once we met,
> And love with old familiar love.

Mr. Watts-Dunton, knowing Christina only during the wholly self-abnegating years of her life, was still acute enough to catch the suggestion of this fervid strain linking her sympathetically to the man he so much loved. "No doubt," he says, "there

was mixed with her spiritualism, or perhaps underlying it, a rich sensuousness that under other circumstances of life would have made itself manifest, and also a rare potentiality of deep passion."

For this reason many of her poems on sin, of which, of course, she knew nothing at all experimentally, are quick with intelligence and move the heart profoundly. For this reason, too, she emphasised the straitness and narrowness of the positively virtuous path. It was no part of her scheme of morality to point out its pleasantness. Renunciation is not pleasant. The generous capacity to love and to enjoy the jocund life of careless self-indulgence will see no beauty, she well knows, in the patient ascent. Thus, without descending to compromise or hypocrisy, she trusts to the spur of the truth :

> Does the road wind up-hill all the way ?
> Yes, to the very end.
> Will the day's journey take the whole long day ?
> From morn till night, my friend.

Someone has said that the warmth of her personality revealed itself in her eyes,

> That seemed to love whate'er they looked upon.

After her fierce illness she liked to veil these eyes from strangers, her friends say, and as her bodily infirmities increased she certainly veiled more and more the ardour of her temperament. The purpose of her life became firmly repressive, and to such

repression she counselled others, dropping gradually into the conventionalities of real religious expression. Certain passages of her prose are the very children of the spirit in which the *Imitation of Christ* was written by that gentle monk who to the outer eye knew a life more placid even than Christina's.

"Strip sin bare from the voluptuousness of music, fascination of gesture, entrancement of the stage, rapture of poetry, glamour of eloquence, seduction of imaginative emotion; strip it of every adornment: let it stand out bald as in the Ten stern Commandments. Study sin, when study it we must, not as a relishing pastime but as an embittering deterrent. Lavish sympathy on the sinner, never on the sin."

In 1870 Maria Rossetti died, and in the autumn of the same year Christina, her mother, and her two aunts settled at 30 Torrington Square, which continued to be Christina's home for the remaining eighteen years of her life. The house was a commonplace abode of dingy brick. The interior impressed all those who have written of it by its sombre aspect, one witness characterising its spiritual atmosphere as that of old age, "a silence that draped and muffled" the place. It was plainly furnished, but Dante Gabriel's gifts of old furniture, to which he alludes from time to time in his letters, were scattered through the rooms, and some of his pictures hung upon the walls. In the drawing-room was a little glass case of ferns which Christina cherished.

She had the belief that plants were conscious in a way of their own, and when she was told that science upheld this idea she exclaimed, as her brother might have done: "There is something in science after all."

There was no garden to the house, merely a little yard at the back, and this defect made Dante Gabriel wonder that they could go on living there when for the same rent they could find places with ample grounds. It is a significant detail that Christina's library contained few books, and that nineteen-twentieths of these, according to her brother William, were of her mother's choosing. *Cranford* was one of her favourites, and she liked certain novels, but bookishness was not her foible.

After Dante Gabriel's death in 1882 Christina and her mother spent nine weeks at Birchington awaiting the completion of the stained-glass window to his memory placed in the church there at his mother's expense. Christina undertook the correspondence involved, and her letters to Mr. Shields who executed the work are models of fine tact and good-feeling, and throw also much light on the practical methods of the splendid old lady to whom now, as of old, debt was an enemy to grapple with untiringly.

"It will always remain your labour of love," Christina writes at the close of the episode, "but my Mother begs you as soon as possible to let her have an exhaustive list of her money debts to the Glass Firm and much more to yourself: that she may as

HERE SLEEPS
GABRIEL CHARLES DANTE ROSSETTI
HONOURED UNDER THE NAME OF
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
AMONG PAINTERS AS A PAINTER
AND AMONG POETS AS A POET
BORN IN LONDON
OF PARENTAGE MAINLY ITALIAN 12 MAY 1828
DIED AT BIRCHINGTON 9 APRIL 1882.

ROSSETTI'S TOMBSTONE IN BIRCHINGTON CHURCHYARD.

quickly as she can meet her liabilities. At 84 she feels that to-day's duty had more than ever better be performed to-day and not postponed until to-morrow."

In 1886 Mrs. Rossetti died: "I am glad it is I and not she that is left sorrowful and lonely," Christina said: but after this she herself grew old and lost much of the brightness so bravely cultivated in the unpropitious ground of her natural temperament. Her passionate attachment to her mother had taken tender and protecting forms as age made its pitiful appeal. The "Beloved Example" became also the beloved child, to be pleased with playful attentions. One of these was a habit begun in 1876 and carried on for ten years, of writing verses to her on St. Valentine's day, she having reflected that she had never received a valentine. Each one that came thereafter was a fresh surprise, as in the interval the good lady had forgotten all about the new custom. The little verses are all of them touching enough in their simplicity, and those dated 1885 are especially so in their picture of the gentle companionship so soon to be dissolved:

You and I, my Mother,
  Have lived the winter through,
And still we play our daily parts
  And still find work to do:
And still the cornfields flourish,
  The olive and the vine,
And still you reign my Queen of Hearts
  And I 'm your Valentine.

Christina's two aunts outlived her mother, one by three, the other by seven years, so it was not until 1893 that she was left to fight her own long last battle comparatively alone. She survived eighteen months, dying of cancer, complicated by a functional disease of the heart and by dropsy, on the 29th of December, in her sixty-fourth year. Her life had not been eventful, but she was worn by its inner tumults and even at the last was troubled in conscience for Heaven knows what imaginary failures in attaining her austere ideal. She who was called above all writers "the singer of death," and who had kept it in view, not always with the exaltation of the saint, frequently with the very human hope of finding through it the love long relinquished on earth, and sometimes with the human dread of being forgotten by those whose "life stood full at blessed noon," was tired enough finally to regard it in her last poem as pure and simple rest :

> Fast asleep. Singing birds in their leafy cover
> Cannot wake her, nor shake her the gusty blast—
> Under the purple thyme and the purple clover
> Sleeping at last.

She was buried in the family plot at Highgate Cemetery.

The outline of Christina Rossetti's life is so slender and so monotonous that it is almost impossible to gain from it a definite portrait of her mental and spiritual aspect. For this we must look within her work, and play at the dangerous game of inferences.

Certain features seem to stand out descriptive in this exceedingly personal work of hers and tend to make us believe that the image of her in the minds of the persons who knew her last, and who have written of her from the standpoint of that knowledge, is a very partial image from which much life has fled. With their eyes fixed on the saintliness of her ways they lose sight of the contest in which that saintliness has been won. And yet no writer has been at less pains to conceal or disguise this contest. Perhaps the explanation of her lifelong aspiration toward a goal from which her thought constantly wandered earthward was her dependence upon natures firmer than her own. Of his sisters Rossetti once said, "Maria was the leader. Christina could never lead anyone." And it is apparently true enough that she followed Maria's footsteps to the very threshold of the convent, pausing there only because the qualities that kept her from leadership made her the one to assume the duties of family life. To humble herself seemed to be her great ambition. Just before she died she said, "This illness has humbled me. I was so proud before." And thus humility has naturally been set down as one of her conspicuous virtues. But this gentle characteristic becomes more attractive if we remember that it was the conscious reaction of a temperament not free from pride. Whatever she was, she was not quiescent. She never forgot that happiness consists in getting what we want and not

of doing without it. She never cheated herself into thinking that self-denial was pleasant or that the joys of the religious life were the only joys worth knowing. With all her sincere belief in the vast importance of her own methods of nourishing the soul she had a liberal indulgence toward those who found the pagan world beautiful. "The poet and saint, who has passed from a world she never loved," wrote one of her friends after her death, "lived a life of sacrifice, suffered many partings, unreluctantly endured the pains of her spirituality; but she kept, in their quickness, her simple and natural love of love and hope of joy for another time. Such sufferings as hers do indeed refuse, but they have not denied, delight. Delight is all their faith." Perhaps it would have been even truer to say that she passed from a world whose passionate wooing of her nature had won her love indeed, but which she had resolutely put aside, hoping none the less to find it and no other world in a heaven where she could innocently yield to it.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI: HER POETRY.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, writing to Christina on the subject of her poetry, bade her beware "of what might be called a falsetto-muscularity of style." For this brotherly anxiety there was little cause. The quality of Christina's imagination and the quality of her expression are alike feminine. Even her thoughts are restricted to the simple round of "woman's sphere,"—of the mediæval woman's sphere, indeed, which encompassed loving and grieving and praying. We find in her poetry neither politics nor socialism nor pedantry; we hear only the subdued tones of pathos and of sentiment in a voice so plaintive and so sweet that we hardly notice its penetrating power. Neither do we notice very much the art with which the poetry is made. The lines are frequently so wayward, the lapses in metre and rhyme are so surprising, the language is usually so homely and direct, that we are sometimes inclined to deny that the form is artistic at all, and to base the extraordinary

appeal made by her poems upon their message and the purity of their suggestion. One of her critics did, in fact, say with kindly hesitation: "At its best her work is almost art." Perhaps this is true. Certainly at its best her genius pours the thought into a mould so beautiful that no fastidious selection could improve it, but so vital and characteristic that to speak of it as art seems almost to belittle it. The informing spirit at these moments seems, as far as such a thing is possible, independent of the form. The emotion may be conveyed, as in the sonnets of *Monna Innominata*, by lines of exquisitely tender dignity, flowing like a broad and stately river unbrokenly toward the deeps of feeling, or by lines as rugged as *The Despised and Rejected* contains, or as halting and wilful as those of the *Autumn* stanzas, without differing greatly in its power over the reader. Sometimes, indeed, her caprice of method lends charm to the result, giving it the unexpectedness of inspiration, bringing the poetic vision uncorrected into the reader's presence with the confiding boldness and fascination of a beautiful child. Nor is her attitude toward her poetry an artful one in any sense of the word. It is her father's mantle of improvisation that has descended upon her, and she sings at her work, at her monotonous and commonplace tasks, with the spontaneity of a thrush. She had no gift of self-criticism, and her Muse played her at times the shabbiest of tricks, letting her admit what Lowell calls "an every-dayness" of phrase or a reflection hopelessly prosaic to the

same page with her true Dæmon. In *The Lambs of Grasmere*, for example, she seems overwhelmed by the influence of Grasmere's poet at his most ludicrous moments when in good faith she can write:

> Day after day, night after night,
> From lamb to lamb the shepherds went,
> With teapots for the bleating mouths,
> Instead of nature's nourishment.

Yet following this unpoetical outpouring come the rapturous verses called *A Birthday*, the gayest and blithest she ever wrote, overrunning with exultant metaphor and liberal vitality:

> My heart is like a singing bird
> Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
> My heart is like an apple-tree
> Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
> My heart is like a rainbow shell
> That paddles in a halcyon sea;
> My heart is gladder than all these
> Because my love is come to me.
>
> Raise me a dais of silk and down:
> Hang it with rare and purple dyes:
> Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
> And peacocks with a hundred eyes:
> Work it in gold and silver grapes,
> In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys:
> Because the birthday of my life
> Is come, my love is come to me.

We know from her brother William how much she was actually at the service of her gift. "Something would come into her mind and her hand would obey the dictation." He supposes that afterward she took the pains she thought requisite to the form, but

there is no evidence that she laboured greatly to this end, and as a matter of fact, although he was almost constantly in the same house with her up to her forty-sixth year, he cannot remember ever seeing her (except in their childish rhyming games) "in the act of composition." She had none of Dante Gabriel's passion for revision, nor did she have the habit of submitting her work to others for criticism, although to him she sent two volumes of her poems before their publication that he might advise her concerning them.

Her first volume, setting aside the little book privately printed by her grandfather, bore the title *Goblin Market, and Other Poems.* The opening poem, *Goblin Market,* is her witch-child. It has been compared to *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* and to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and to Grimm's *Fairy Tales,* and it is not in the least like any of them except that it journeys through the land of unreality. It is surely, said a critic in the *London Quarterly Review*, "the most naïve and childlike poem in our language. The narrative has so matter-of-fact, and at the same time so fantastic and bewildering an air, that we are fairly puzzled into acceptance of everything. The very rhythm, the leaping and hopping rhythm, which renders the goblin merchantmen visible to us, has something elfin and proper to the 'little people' in its almost infantile jingle and cadence. It is all as fresh and as strange as the dreams of childhood." Accepting this infantile jingle and cadence, this whimsical,

leaping spirit of childhood, as the great characteristic of the poem, we get from it also something decidedly unchildish; or perhaps it would be truer to say that the unconscious sensibility of childhood to the glowing beauty of the pagan natural world and to its luscious and liberal delights is rendered with mature consciousness. Only an Italian—a grown-up child, that is—could have brought about the combination in just such a way.

The story is itself childish enough, with an obvious moral. Two sisters, Laura and Lizzie, visit the typical glen where one "dare n't go a-hunting for fear of little men." The little men are there—

> One had a cat's face,
> One whisked a tail,
> One tramped at a rat's pace,
> One crawled like a snail,
> One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
> One like a ratel tumbled hurry-scurry.

They try to sell fruit to the sisters, and "sweet-toothed Laura" presently succumbs. She has no money, so they accept in payment a golden curl cut from her head. She eats the fruit in spite of Lizzie's warning reminders of a certain dead Jeanie who had done likewise and had pined and pined away, to fall with the first snow. In time Laura also begins to dwindle and grow pale, and Lizzie, to save her, returns to the glen and buys the wares of the little men, but will not eat. They crush the fruit against her face and the juice flows over her dimpled cheeks

and chin. Then, escaping, she hastens back to Laura, who kisses the juice away, thus tasting it again. This time it scorches her lips, and she loathes the feast and falls down in agony. When she awakes the spell is broken and all danger is past for her. She lives to tell her children years after

> —"how her sister stood
> In deadly peril to do her good,
> And win the fiery antidote :
> Then joining hands to little hands
> Would bid them cling together,
> For there is no friend like a sister,
> In calm or stormy weather,
> To cheer one on the tedious way,
> To fetch one if one goes astray,
> To lift one if one totters down,
> To strengthen whilst one stands.

The glory of the poem is in the splendid play of fiery-coloured imagery constantly interrupting the plain narrative style. It opens with an astounding fall of rich tropical fruits,

> Apples and quinces,
> Lemons and oranges,
> Plump, unpecked cherries,
> Melons and raspberries,
> Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
> Swart-headed mulberries,
> Wild, free-born cranberries,
> Crab-apples, dewberries,
> Pine-apples, blackberries,
> Apricots, strawberries;—
> All ripe together
> In summer weather,—
> Morns that pass by,

Fair eves that fly ;
Come, buy ; come, buy :

Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright, fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come, buy ; come, buy.

In this category of the goblin's song what suggestions do we not get of hot southern orchards and the terraced vineyards of Italy! And in the descriptions of the two girls there is the same opulent sense of the delicious fairness of visible things, expressed this time in lavish metaphors that a child might feel indeed, but could hardly understand: they are scattered over the plainer fabric of the piece like gems incrusting pure, translucent glass. After the grotesque procession of animal-faced men has passed we gain a sudden flashing glimpse of Laura stretching out her gleaming neck,

Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

And delicately set among the visions of the fierce summer day is the exquisite picture of the two girls asleep as Dante Gabriel drew them for the title-page:

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fallen snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forebore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Then, following the rugged passage in which Lizzie is mauled by the angry little men, comes this image of the fair resisting maiden:

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

This poem — named by Dante Gabriel, and dedicated to Maria Rossetti in the original manuscript — emphasised at the start Christina's place among the few who write "first-best" things. Nothing like it

preceded it and nothing of precisely the same flavour can ever follow it.

Among the "other poems" of the volume are some of the best examples of Christina's various styles. In nearly all of them we get the characteristic note of a melancholy deep but not languid, and a curious interrogation of the inmost recesses of the human spirit that haunts the imagination. Of what may be called intellectual curiosity she has nothing, but her questioning of the unseen region at the door of which the intellect stands baffled is unceasing. She never doubts but she always wonders. Again and again in imagination she crosses the bridge of death and explores the further shore. Her ghosts come back with familiar forms, familiar sensations, and familiar words. The gruesome little *At Home* vies with the stanzas of the Persian pessimist himself in its poignant rendering of the interest felt by the dead concerning the world relinquished. No imagery could be so pitilessly terrible as its homely actuality, and no mist-enshrouded ghost of the literary stage is so impressive as the poor spirit standing lonely in its old place among the feasting friends.

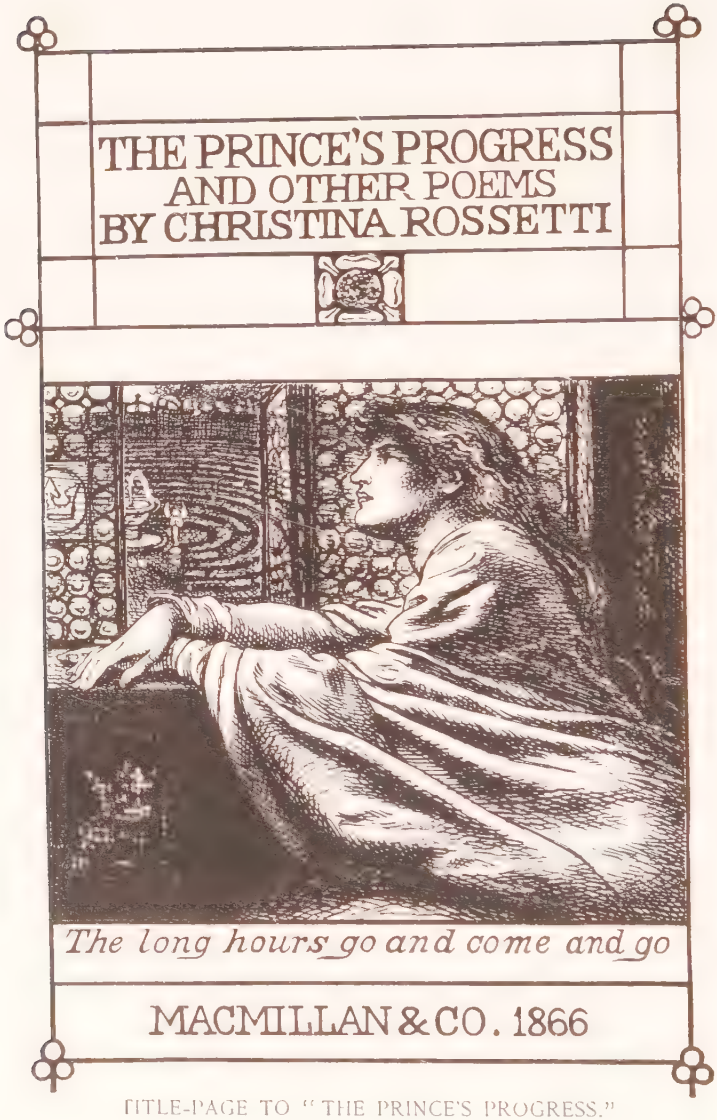
"To-morrow," said they, strong with hope,
And dwelt upon the pleasant way:
"To-morrow," cried they, one and all,
While no one spoke of yesterday.
Their life stood full at blessed noon;
I, only I, had passed away:
"To-morrow and to-day," they cried:
I was of yesterday.

I shivered comfortless, but cast
No chill across the table-cloth ;
I, all forgotten, shivered, sad
To stay, and yet to part how loath :
I passed from the familiar room
I who from love had passed away,
Like the remembrance of a guest
That tarrieth but a day.

The preoccupation with the moods of the dead is not always expressed in lamentation. One of the best-known lyrics is the peaceful one beginning,

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me,

but it must be granted that in the main this early volume, after we leave the fantastic market-place of the goblins, is essentially a sombre one. It contains, however, the four poems one or another of which has been selected by her brother, Dante Gabriel, by her most instructed critic, by Mr. Swinburne, and by the public, as representing the purest essence of her genius. These are *The Convent Threshold*, *An Apple-Gathering*, *Advent*, and *Uphill*. Beside them for singular strength and technical distinction should be placed *The Three Enemies* and the third of the *Old and New Year Ditties*. The former won the sufferances of her most adverse critic, a writer for the *Catholic World*. After condemning the greater part of the volume in terms of contemptuous disapproval he greets *The Three Enemies* with the phrase, "What in the wide realm of English poetry is more beautiful or more Catholic than this!" The



TITLE-PAGE TO "THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS."

latter is peculiar for its rhyme endings, the twenty-six lines having but one rhyme among them, yet keeping the effect of dignity and variety. The irregular length of the lines, a trick of the Italian "canzone" Mr. Rossetti reminds us, their rapid dactylic movement, the simplicity of the whole scheme, are appalling in view of the high intention of the poem, but the intention is fully realised though it is difficult to think of any other hands through which it could have passed triumphantly.

In 1866 came another volume, *The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems*, opening with another long narrative poem, this time a romantic ballad, extremely unequal in the merit of its stanzas, with touches of magical sweetness and with exquisite cadences, but without the robust vitality of the earlier fairy-story. Some one has found in the description of the waiting princess given at the end of the poem a portrait of its author as from this time on she grew to be. Whatever truth there is in the rather fanciful suggestion, this rendering of the mood in which all earthly happenings are unimportant is consummate:

> We never heard her speak in haste:
> Her tones were sweet,
> And modulated just so much
> As it was meet:
>
> Her heart sat silent through the noise
> And concourse of the street.
> There was no hurry in her hands,

No hurry in her feet ;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

The other poems in this second volume are all inferior to the finer work of the first, but the curious *Eve* is a very remarkable illustration of Christina's attitude of mind toward animals. The spectacle of the "piteous beasts" pausing in their customary occupations to condole with Eve on the death of Abel would be ridiculous were it not so convincing. Bring what sceptical spirit you may to the scene, you cannot discredit the emotion of these kneeling camels, these wistful storks, these "kind harts" weeping, these doves cooing desolation, and those who have known the sympathy of a sympathetic animal will not need to go through the process of conversion. The conceit is so Rossettian in its daring simplicity that it might almost stand as a family poem, representing the zoological spirit pervading that quaint community of kindred souls and disparate minds.

To reach the perfect blossom of Christina's gift, we must pass over a quantity of her prose, and a book of children's verses much admired by some of her critics, to the collection called *A Pageant and Other Poems*, published in 1881. In this volume occur the *Monna Innominata* sonnets, the "sonnet of sonnets" their author calls them, fourteen nearly perfect examples of the most purely artistic form of verse, embodying an emotion as controlled and

sincere as the emotion of the lyrics is sometimes perfervid and youthful. Because they express love thwarted and not realised, and the repression instead of the overflow of sentiment, they are usually placed second to Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. At least there would seem to be no other reason for such an order of position. In technical and spiritual beauty they are indisputably far above the rare achievement of the happier lover and lesser poet. From a writer of Christina's predilection we should have expected the Shakespearian sonnet form,—the three quatrains with the couplet at the end,—as affording a more flexible model to convey a greater suggestion of sweetness and melody, just as we should have expected the utterance to be more conspicuous for fervour than for power and depth. In contradicting this natural inference she unconsciously shows the scope of her extraordinary character. Her sonnets, and these sonnets in particular, are her most subjective work, and in them she reveals both the force of the passionate devotion by which she is constantly inspired, and the sovereignty she attains over it. She also reveals her instinct for fitness of form by choosing the noblest and most balanced intellectual structure to convey her exalted emotion. While the rhyme endings of her sonnets are sometimes irregular, the radical and essential arrangement of thought and design is maintained with great fidelity. The structure in the main is that of the contemporary type of English sonnet in

which what is called the "wave form" is conspicuous; in which, that is, the emotions and the melody rise gradually in the octave and fall back in shorter beats of rhythm and with a contrasting thought in the sestet. The purest models of this type, like the sonnets of *The House of Life*, emphasise the turning of the thought and of the metre by separating the sestet by a little distance from the octave. Christina makes no such division nor does she use a quicker metre for her sestet than for her octave; and in these respects her sonnet resembles the Miltonian model, in which a continuous thought is expressed by a continuity of form. While nearly all of the *Monna Innominata* sonnets show two contrasting sides of the intellectual conception, and the sestet forms a kind of antiphonal response to the octave, the idea is always the outcome of a fixed emotion, a mighty love in the shadow of renunciation in which the lighter play of the mind has no part. Hence this general continuity of the form is appropriate and gives unity and dignity to the two aspects of the thought. Take, for example, the ninth sonnet:

Thinking of you, and all that was, and all
  That might have been and now can never be,
  I feel your honoured excellence, and see
Myself unworthy of the happier call:
For woe is me who walk so apt to fall,
  So apt to shrink afraid, so apt to flee,
  Apt to lie down and die (ah, woe is me!)
Faithless and hopeless turning to the wall.
And yet not hopeless quite nor faithless quite,
Because not loveless: love may toil all night,

But take at morning: wrestle till the break
Of day, but then wield power with God and man:—
So take I heart of grace as best I can,
Ready to spend and be spent for your sake.

If there were a sharp division here between the melancholy cadence of the first eight lines and the accruing strength of the last six we should altogether lose the fine, slow turn of the feeling from despair to courage and from quiescence to action.

The diction unlike that of Dante Gabriel's sonnets, is simple to severity. Where he links symbol to symbol in an ecstasy of elaboration, Christina abandons even her customary tendency to decorative use of words and sets her thought before us with scarcely an appeal to our æsthetic sensibilities beyond the appeal made by the superb architecture of her lines. The metaphors employed are grave in character and invariably harmonious with the nobility of the emotion depicted. Herein is the greatest point of departure from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. We could search the *Monna Innominata* series from its beginning to its end without unearthing a passage so disconcerting as this from Mrs. Browning:

Antidotes
Of medicated music, answering for
Mankind's forlornest uses thou canst pour
From thence into their ears,

or so strained as this one:

The dancers will break footing, from the care
Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.

And if we miss the rush of emotion that certainly enlivens Mrs. Browning's sonnets, we also escape a sense of hurry and confusion that is felt in some of them.

Regarding Christina's series as a whole we receive an impression, rendered possible by their sad significance, of a great passion swelling to its height to fall back in an ebbing surge "to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea," the "wave form" repeated in the construction of the entire conception. This impression, produced by the sequence of the individual sonnets, those expressing the pure enchantment of love upon the mind and heart preceding the ones in which the doom of unfulfilment is foreseen, gives the same intellectual pleasure that we get from all the stately rhythms of nature, and so far from seeming an artifice intensifies the effect of unpremeditated art. It is not too much—it is not really enough—to say that the love poems of this little group, considered both technically and emotionally, combine more faultlessly the great qualities of passion and spiritual reticence, than any other love poetry of the present century.

To turn back for a moment to the two children's books, *Sing-Song* and *Speaking Likenesses*, published in 1872 and 1874, we find them curiously out of touch with the world of little people to which the *Goblin Market* certainly appealed. *Sing-Song* is a collection of short poems, some of them only quatrains, written for children of an age, one might guess,

ranging from two to three. One does not ask for more than Mother Goose ditties at this simple time of life and would not welcome elaboration if it were offered. But there is simplicity and simplicity. It is difficult to find the moment antedating the birth of romance in a child's mind. Even the most prosaic men and women can most of them remember a native fairyland of one kind or another in which they spent a little time before the painful necessity of growing up was forced upon them, and during this sojourn they knew the capacity for wonder that stays so long with certain childlike temperaments, that stayed so long with Christina's own, and that never left her brother, Dante Gabriel. No child is well worth telling stories to, moreover, who has not transmigrated into some other inhabitant of the world he wonders about, to explore his sensations and compare them with his own. In his extrospective zeal he "pretends" to be a pirate or a soldier or a policeman, or anyone likely to meet with stirring adventures. Or if he happens to be a girl he plays at keeping house and having sick children and a drunken husband, and a tea-party, and fifty other excitements of a more purely social nature. He is not usually clever enough to reverse this operation, and play that his most sympathetic companions, his dogs and his cats, are endowed with his own particular faculties, but he is uniformly delighted to have other people play this for him. Mr. Kipling is good at it, and so was Mr. Stevenson, and so has many a

humbler writer proved himself. But Christina, who spent her quaint childhood in a very wonderland of imaginations, fails to unlock its door for the children to whom she writes so lovingly. Compare the little poem from *A Child's Garden of Verses,* beginning

> My bed is like a little boat ;
> Nurse helps me in when I embark ;

with one of Christina's boating fancies, such as

> Ferry me across the water,
> Do, boatman, do ;
> If you 've a penny in your purse
> I 'll ferry you ;

to realise the difference between writing *for* children and writing *at* them. The little verses of *Sing-Song* are pleasant and amiable, and point little morals in an unobtrusive way, as when a kindly dispositioned child observes

> My clothes are soft and warm
> Fold upon fold,
> But I 'm so sorry for the poor
> Out in the cold.

Not one of them, however, suggests the true delicious experiences of a child's first gay plunge into the capital game of life on that glorious playground the name of which is youth.

The prose stories for children in *Speaking Likenesses* are a trifle better in this respect. In the words of one of their young readers they are decidedly "goody-goody," but quaint descriptions help along the moral, and the agreeable puppies, intelligent

frogs, and helpful moles, add a degree of piquancy to the very simple tales. Just why there was not more put into them of the fascination which animals unmistakably had for Christina, however, is a question. Perhaps she was more at ease in the company of children of her own age or older, as people who are trying very hard to behave their best often are, but it is certainly a pity that her sweet, gracious, playful temperament should not have found its chance to forget the stress of restraint and aspiration in the most inspiriting amusements of that world "so full of a number of things," which something very like shyness seems to have shut her out of.[1]

To write of Christina's poetry without specific reference to her devotional poems would be to

[1] It is fair, perhaps, to quote in connection with this expression of individual judgment the diametrically opposite opinion of a capable writer in the *London Quarterly Review*. He says:

"Children, we must remember, especially very small children, play a great part in the world of Miss Rossetti's poetry. They have, indeed, a book all to themselves, one of the loveliest books in the language, comparable with nothing that has gone before it, and touched, in its own realm, by nothing before it or since, save only the divinest of the *Songs of Innocence*. *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme-Book*, illustrated with pictures almost equal to the poems, by Arthur Hughes, makes a very little book for all its hundred and twenty poems of pictures; but its covers contain a lyric treasure such as few books, small or great, can boast of. It used to be thought a slight and unimportant thing to have written children's songs or children's stories: we are getting beyond that delusion and beginning to see that children's art is a vastly important matter, that it is by no means easy work to do, and that it can be done as well from a purely artistic point of view, as the art which appeals to grown-up people. Who can tell how many times we should have to multiply the imagination shown in the portentous *She*, to find the imagination required for a single chapter of *The Cuckoo Clock*: and who would not give twenty *Epics of Hades* for the little volume of *Sing-Song*? Such poetry evades analysis; we could as easily dissect a butterfly's wing. It is simply a child's mood, a child's fancies and ideas set to song; with grave touches and tones of sudden seriousness here and there among the blithe April weather of its little world, like the voice of a wise elder who is still a child at heart, and among children."

neglect not the essence of her genius as the larger number of her readers would doubtless have us believe, but certainly one of its most curious and interesting phenomena. We hear that her first formulated ambition was to write a really fine hymn. By the time she reached the end of her life by far the greater proportion of her verse was religious. She has been compared to Herbert and to Vaughn and to Keble, whom she disliked, and even to Crashaw, whom she did not remotely resemble. The two great qualities of her religious poems are those that also distinguish her most purely secular songs,—sincerity and fervour. The point of separation between her devout religious poetry and that of the writers named above is her imaginative grasp of human experience. No reclaimed sinner who has tasted the bitter and the sweet of self-indulgence could more liberally appraise its pleasures.

We feel this not so much from any categorical statement of the world's attractions, but from the wrench of parting with that worthless world, a wrench she is too honest ever to ignore.

> My fellow-pilgrims pass me and attain
> That hidden mansion of perpetual peace,
> Where keen desire and hope dwell free from pain :
> That gate stands open of perennial ease ;
> I view the glory till I partly long,
> Yet lack the fire of love which quickens these,
> O, passing Angel, speed me with a song,
> A melody of heaven to reach my heart
> And rouse me to the race and make me strong ;
> Till in such music I take up my part.

In the comparatively few poems that ring with such music as she here prays to make, however, we miss the note that sets her poetry in the place it occupies with those who value the sum of her rich, tender, appealing, and courageous personality far above any one detached quality, even that of saintliness. The passage the spirit of which gives to the poem called *A Martyr* its chief strength and its unique beauty is that in which she speaks to the one she is leaving from a heart "unsatisfied and young,"

> Alas, alas, mine earthly love, alas,
> For whom I thought to don the garments white
> And white wreath of a bride, this rugged pass
> Hath utterly divorced me from thy care;
> Yea, I am to thee as a shattered glass
> Worthless with no more beauty lodging there,
> Abhorred lest I involve thee in my doom:
> For sweet are sunshine and this upper air,
> And life and youth are sweet, and give us room
> For all most sweetest sweetnesses we taste:
> Dear, what hast thou in common with a tomb?

It was, after all, what she self-reproachingly calls

> The foolishest fond folly of a heart
> That hankers after Heaven, but clings to earth;

which gave her the great distinction she has won as a religious poet and the power to appeal to an audience ordinarily untouched by religious poetry. In the commemorative service held in the church she had been accustomed to attend, when the reredos painted by Burne-Jones was placed there to her memory, the venerable Bishop of Durham told the

large concourse of people assembled in her honour that the dedication of her poetical genius to the service of God had been the most complete this century had known. And this was true, but not perhaps quite in the sense the Bishop meant it, for he went on to say that the passionate and sensuous quality of her early secular verse was merely the apprenticeship and basis of her production as an artist. The judgment of a recent writer in the *Quarterly Review* comes much nearer to plucking out the heart of the truly baffling mystery of her devotional poetry.

"One is tempted," he says, "to advance the seeming paradox that it is in her least personal poems, those in which symbolism and allegory predominate, that we get the truest presentment of her personality. For the purely devotional writings, outcome as they are of an elementary part of her nature, are to a great extent the expression of that one part only, and lack the peculiar quality which is the hallmark of her veritable self. They are poetical, but the poetry is less inevitable in them than the religious feeling; the soul of the poet is dominated by the heart of the saint. The statement again sounds paradoxical, inasmuch as the soul is generally credited with qualities more spiritual than those assigned to the heart: but the spirit of Christina Rossetti had a wider vision, understanding, and sympathy than could be contained within the limits of a definite religious feeling or a conscious creed; and the poet's perception, apprehending intuitively the spiritual

element and import in much not commonly associated with religion, was more inherently part of herself than the devotional consciousness which both animated and controlled her heart."

We can at least say without doing violence to the purity of her exalted and exalting nature that her poetry served God most fully when it gave fullest expression to her deep love of all good things earthly or divine. Love that preserved the lesser in the greater was, we repeat, what she longed for most, if we read her poetry aright.

> Many have sung of love a root of bane
> While to my mind a root of balm it is,
> For love at length breeds love; sufficient bliss
> For life and death and rising up again.
> Surely when light of Heaven makes all things plain,
> Love will grow plain with all its mysteries;
> Nor shall we need to fetch from over seas
> Wisdom or wealth or pleasure safe from pain.
> Love in our borders, love within our heart,
> Love all in all, we then shall bide at rest,
> Ending forever life's unending quest,
> Ended for ever effort, change and fear;
> Love all in all; no more that better part
> Purchased, but at the cost of all things here.

Mr. Watts-Dunton has said that in her brother Gabriel a mystic and sensuous temper struggled with the asceticism of early Christian art until the sensuous nature gained the mastery and asceticism was eliminated while mysticism remained. In her much the same struggle took place, but asceticism gained ground and all that was opposed to it gradually passed out of sight.

As she advanced in years prose took the place of poetry with her, and her prose pitilessly betrays every defect of her style and every limitation of her mind. To the general reader it is incurably dull, although great numbers of those who lean upon devotional books have found in its humility of spirit and unassuming holiness of intention,—precisely the qualities to make it most acceptable. *The Face of the Deep*, published in 1892 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, is her last accomplishment, and is a volume of over five hundred and fifty pages, to the making of which she took between two and three years. It is in the form of a commentary on the *Apocalypse*, written chiefly in a didactic style with garrulous reflections. Lyrics of more or less merit are scattered up and down it and relieve to some extent the commonplace effect, but the individual charm, the free movement and leaping imagination of Christina the poet is hopelessly forfeited. The Christian cry of entreaty and adoration that rings with so melodious a sound in the devotional poems of her best type has become the conventional intonation of an uninspired though devout worshipper. In her sweet capricious metres we are frequently reminded of her own suggestive lines:

> Without, within me, music seemed to be:
> Something not music, yet most musical,
> Silence and sound in heavenly harmony,

but her incongruous prose seems to have forgotten the name of harmony. It is, indeed, to paraphrase

Lowell's definition of Dryden, "prose with a kind of Æolian attachment." There are passages here and there to persuade the reader of the author's identity with the poet of *Confluents* and *An Apple-Gathering*, but it lacks sadly enough the fine literary sense by which prose is made at once plastic to its meaning, unhackneyed, and beautiful. Perhaps it was only the kind of failure sure to result when a nature of strong idiosyncrasy attempts to break its own natural spirit and part company with itself. In the light of her literary biography none of her poems reads more significantly than *Who Shall Deliver Me:*

God harden me against myself,
This coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease and rest and joys.

Myself, arch-traitor to myself:
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free.

LIST OF THE MORE IMPORTANT WRITINGS

OF DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

Arranged in chronological sequence. The dates indicate the approximate time of composition without reference to the time of publication. The list is compiled chiefly from the one given by Mr. William Rossetti in his book : *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer,* but has been somewhat extended.

1843. Sorrentino. (*Prose.*) Unfinished and unpublished.
1843. Sir Hugh the Heron. (*Prose.*) Privately printed.
1844 ? Bürger's Lenore. (*Translation.*)
1845. Corsican Ballad from Merimée's Colomba. (*Translation.*)
1845 ? To Mary in Summer.
1845–6. The Niebelungenlied. Unfinished.
1846 ? Diary by Rossetti. (*Prose.*) Unpublished.
1846–7 ? Henry the Leper. Translation from *Der Arme Heinrich.*
1846–81 ? Collected Works.
1847 ? Two Songs. (*Translations from Victor Hugo.*)
1847 ? The Choice.
1847–8. Dante's *Vita Nuova.* (*Prose and Poetry.*) Translation.
1847–9. The Early Italian Poets. (*Translations.*)
1847–9. Dante and His Circle. (*Prose and Poetry.*) Translations.
1847–60 ? The Bride's Prelude, or Bride-Chamber Talk. Unfinished.
1847–69. The Portrait.

1847–8? Capitolo: A. M. Salirni to Francesco Ridi, 16- (*Translation.*)
1847–69. The Blessed Damozel.
1847–69. My Sister's Sleep.
1847–70. Poems.
1847–81. The House of Life.
1847–81. Ballads and Sonnets.
1847–82? The Dutchman's Pipe. Unpublished.
1848? Autumn Song.
1848? At the Sunrise in 1848.
1848–9. The Girlhood of Mary Virgin. Two Sonnets.
1848–9? On Refusal of Aid between Nations.
1848–69? The Card-dealer.
1848–70. St. Agnes of Intercession. (*Prose.*) Unfinished.
1849. London to Folkestone.
" Boulogne to Amiens and Paris.
" The Staircase of Notre Dame, Paris.
" On the Place de la Bastille.
" For a Venetian Pastoral by Giorgione.
" On the Louvre Gallery.
" On a Cancan at the Salle Valentino.
" On a Last Visit to the Louvre.
" Last Sonnets in Paris. Three.
" For Ruggiero and Angelica, by Ingres. Two Sonnets.
" From Paris to Brussels.
" L'Envoi.
" Vox Ecclesiæ Vox Christi.
" On the Road to Waterloo.
" The Field of Waterloo.
" Return to Brussels.
" Near Brussels,—A Half-way Pause.
" Between Ghent and Bruges.
" Antwerp and Bruges (or The Carillon).
" Hand and Soul. (*Prose.*)
"? Ave.
"? A Song and Music.
1849–52? Dante at Verona.
1849–55? The Sea Limits (or Boulogne Cliffs).
1850. The Mirror.
1850? A Last Confession.

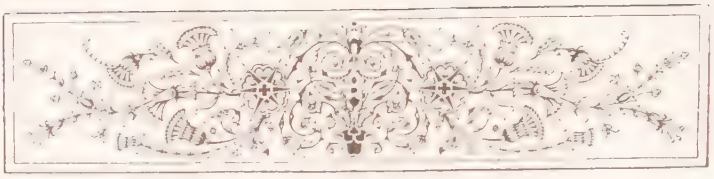
1850? A Young Fir Wood.
1850–8? Jenny.
1851. Poole's Picture: The Goths in Italy. (*Prose criticism.*)
1851. During Music.
1851. Exhibition of Sketches and Drawings. (*Prose criticism.*)
1851. Wellington's Funeral.
1851–9. The Burden of Nineveh.
1852. The Modern Pictures of All Nations, Lichfield House. (*Prose criticism.*)
1852. The Church Porches. Two Sonnets. (The second has been excluded from the collected works, but may be found in *The Century Magazine*, Sept., 1882.)
1852? The Staff and Scrip.
1853. Sonnet on McCracken: Parody from Tennyson's *Kraken*.
1853–80? Sister Helen.
1854? Beauty and the Bird (or The Bullfinch).
1854? English May.
1855? The Passover in the Holy Family.
1856. Madox Brown's Pictures in Liverpool. (*Prose criticism.*)
1857. Madox Brown—Notice in *Men of the Time*. (*Prose.*)
1857? On a Mulberry-tree Planted by Shakespeare.
1857? Known in Vain.
1858? A New Year's Burden.
1858? Lost Days.
1858? Vain Virtues.
1859. On the French Liberation of Italy. Privately printed.
1859? Love's Nocturn.
1859? Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee.
1859? A Little While.
1859? The Song of the Bower.
1860? Inclusiveness.
1861? Cassandra.
1862-80. Life of William Blake, Contributions to. (*Prose.*)
1865? Body's Beauty (or Lady Lilith).
1865? Venus Verticordia.
1866. Soul's Beauty (or Sybilla Palmifera).
1867. Aspecta Medusa.

1868? Nuptial Sleep.
1868? The Love-moon.
1869. Eden Bower.
1869. The Glen.
1869. Troy Town.
1869. The Stream's Secret.
1869. The Orchard-pit. Unfinished.
1869? Willow-wood.
1869? Broken Music.
1869? Stillborn Love.
1869? The One Hope.
1869? Newborn Death.
1870. Ebenezer Jones—Notice in Notes and Queries. (*Prose.*)
1871. Down Stream (or The River's Record).
1871. Barcarola.
1871. Cloud Confines.
1871. Rose Mary.
1871. Sunset Wings.
1871. The Stealthy School of Criticism. (*Prose.*)
1871. Ballad on the Fleshly School of Poetry. Unpublished.
1871. Hake's *Madeline*, and other Poems. (*Prose criticism.*)
1871. Letter to Robert Buchanan. (*Prose.*) Unpublished.
1871. Maclise's Character-portraits. (*Prose.*)
1871? Three Shadows.
1871? Love and Hope.
1871? Cloud and Wind.
1872. Proserpina.
1873. Hake's Parables and Tales. (*Prose criticism.*)
1873. Notice of Gabriele Rossetti in Maunder's *Treasury*. (*Prose.*)
1873. Spring.
1874. Winter.
1874. Oliver Madox Brown. Sonnet.
1874? The Heart of the Night.
1874? Memorial Thresholds.
1875–81. Samuel Palmer, Prose Observations on.
1877. Astarte Syriaca.
1877. Letter in the *Times* (as to non-exhibition of pictures). (*Prose.*)
1878. A Vision of Fiammetta.

1878. To Philip Bourke Marston. Sonnet.
1878. Cyprus. Sonnet. Unpublished.
1880. Sonnet on the Sonnet.
1880. John Keats. Sonnet.
1880. The White Ship.
1880. William Blake. Sonne
1880. Thomas Chatterton. Sonnet.
1880. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Sonnet.
1880. Pride of Youth.
1880–1. The King's Tragedy.
1881. Tiber, Nile, and Thames.
1881. Michelangelo's Kiss.
1881. Czar Alexander the Second.
1881. True Woman.
1882. The Sphinx. Two Sonnets.

Volumes of Published Works, with Dates of Publication.

1843. Sir Hugh the Heron. London. Privately printed.
1861. The Early Italian Poets from Ciullo d'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri (1100–1200–1300) in the Original Metres. Together with Dante's *Vita Nuova*.
1870. Poems. Two Editions. London.
1874. Dante and his Circle, with the Italian Poets preceding him (1100–1200–1300). A Collection of Lyrics, edited and translated in the original metres. Revised and rearranged edition.
1881. Poems. New Edition. London.
1881. Ballads and Sonnets. London.
1882. Ballads and Sonnets. Boston Edition.
1882. Ballads and Sonnets. Tauchnitz Edition.
1882. Poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Boston (U. S.).
1886. The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. With Preface and Notes by William Rossetti. 2 vols.
1898. The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Edited, with Preface by W. M. Rossetti. 1 vol.
1898–1900. The Siddal Edition of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Works.



CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S POEMS.

Arranged chronologically, as published separately, with dates and names of periodicals in which they appeared.
(Compiled from the List of J. P. Anderson, British Museum, given in Mackenzie's *Life of Christina Rossetti.*)

Death's Chill Between. *Athenæum.* Oct. 14, 1848.
Heart's Chill Between. *Athenæum.* Oct. 21, 1848.
Dream Land. *The Germ.* Jan., 1850.
An End. *The Germ.* Jan., 1850.
A Pause of Thought. *The Germ.* Feb., 1850.
Song. *The Germ.* Feb., 1850.
A Testimony. *The Germ.* Feb., 1850.
Repining. *The Germ.* Mar., 1850.
Sweet Death. *The Germ.* Mar., 1850.
Versi. (Italian.) Printed in *The Bouquet Culled from Marylebone Gardens.* June, 1851, to Jan., 1852.
L'Incognita. (Italian.) Printed in *The Bouquet Culled from Marylebone Gardens.* June, 1851, to Jan., 1852.
Corrispondenza Famigliare. (Italian.) Printed in *The Bouquet Culled from Marylebone Gardens.* Jan. to July, 1852 ; July to December, 1852.
"Behold I Stand at the Door and Knock." *Aiken's Year.* 1852–4.
The Lost Titian. (Prose.) *The Crayon.* New York, 1856.
Maude Clare. *Once A Week.* Nov. 5, 1859.
Up-Hill. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Feb., 1861.
A Birthday. *Macmillan's Magazine.* April, 1861.
An Apple-Gathering. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Aug., 1861.
Light Love. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Feb., 1863.

The Bourne. *Macmillan's Magazine.* March, 1863.
The Fairy Prince who Arrived too Late. *Macmillan's Magazine.* May, 1863.
A Bird's-Eye View. *Macmillan's Magazine.* July, 1863.
The Queen of Hearts. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Oct., 1863.
One Day. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Dec., 1863.
Conference between Christ, The Saints, and The Soul. *Lyra Eucharistica.* 1863. (Reprinted as "I Will Lift up Mine Eyes unto the Hills.")
A Royal Princess. Printed in *An Offering to Lancashire.* 1863.
Dream-Love. Printed in *A Welcome.* 1863.
The Offering of the New Law, The One Oblation Once Offered. *Lyra Eucharistica.* 1863.
Articles on Italian Writers and Other Celebrities. (Prose.) *Imperial Dictionary of Biography.* 1857–63.
Come unto Me. *Lyra Eucharistica,* 2nd Edition. 1864.
Sit Down in the Lowest Room. *Macmillan's Magazine.* March, 1864.
My Friend. *Macmillan's Magazine.* December, 1864.
Jesus, do I Love Thee. *Lyra Eucharistica,* 2nd Edition. 1864.
I Know You Not. *Lyra Messianica.* 1864.
Before the Paling of the Stars. *Lyra Messianica.* 1864.
Good Friday. *Lyra Messianica.* 1864.
Easter Even. *Lyra Messianica.* 1864.
Within the Veil. *Lyra Messianica.* 1865.
Paradise in a Symbol. *Lyra Messianica.* 1865.
Paradise in a Dream. *Lyra Messianica.* 1865.
After this the Judgment. *Lyra Mystica.* 1865.
Spring Fancies. *Macmillan's Magazine.* April, 1865.
Last Night. *Macmillan's Magazine.* May, 1865.
Martyr's Song. *Lyra Mystica.* 1865.
Amor Mundi. *The Shilling Magazine.* 1865.
Hero : A Metamorphosis. (Prose.) *The Argosy.* Jan., 1866.
Who Shall Deliver Me? *The Argosy.* Feb., 1866.
If. *The Argosy.* March, 1866.
Consider. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Jan., 1866.
Helen Gray. *Macmillan's Magazine.* March, 1866.
By the Waters of Babylon. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Oct., 1866.

Seasons. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Dec., 1866.
The Waves of this Troublesome World : a Tale of Hastings Ten Years Ago. (Prose.) *The Churchman's Shilling Magazine.* 1867.
Some Pros and Cons about Pews. (Prose.) *The Churchman's Shilling Magazine.* 1867.
Dante, an English Classic. (Prose Essay.) *The Churchman's Shilling Magazine.* 1867.
A Safe Investment. (Prose Story.) *The Churchman's Shilling Magazine.* 1867.
Mother Country. *Macmillan's Magazine.* March, 1868.
A Smile and a Sigh. *Macmillan's Magazine.* May, 1868.
Dead Hope. *Macmillan's Magazine.* May, 1868.
Twilight Night. *The Argosy.* Jan., 1868.
Autumn Violets. *Macmillan's Magazine.* Nov., 1868.
They Desire a Better Country. *Macmillan's Magazine.* March, 1869.
A Christmas Carol. *Scribner's Monthly.* Jan., 1872.
Days of Vanity. *Scribner's Monthly.* Nov., 1872.
A Bird Song. *Scribner's Monthly.* Jan., 1873.
Two Sonnets : 1. Venus's Looking-Glass ; 2. Love Lies Bleeding. *The Argosy.* Jan., 1873.
A Dirge. *The Argosy.* Jan., 1874.
An English Drawing-Room (or Enrica). *Picture Posies.* 1874.
By the Sea. *Picture Posies.* 1874.
A Bride Song. *The Argosy.* Jan., 1875.
Mirrors of Life and Death. *Athenæum.* March 17, 1877.
An October Garden. *Athenæum.* Oct. 27, 1877.
Yet a Little While. *Dublin University Magazine.* 1878.
Husband and Wife. *A Masque of Poets.* 1878.
A Harmony on First Corinthians. *New and Old.* Feb., 1879.
Thou Art the Same, and Thy Years shall not Fail. *The Children's Hymn Book.* 1881.
Resurgam. *Athenæum.* Jan. 28, 1882.
Birchington Churchyard. *Athenæum.* April 28, 1882.
To-day's Burden. *Sonnets of Three Centuries.* 1882.
True in the Main. Two sketches (Prose). *Dawn of Day.* May 1, 1882 ; June 1, 1882.
Michael F. M. Rossetti. *Athenæum.* Feb. 17, 1883.
A Wintry Sonnet. *Macmillan's Magazine.* April, 1883.

Dante: The Poet Illustrated out of the Poem. (Prose.) *The Century.* Feb., 1884.
One Seaside Grave. *The Century.* May, 1884.
A Christmas Carol. *Century Guild Hobby Horse.* 1887.
A Hope Carol. *Century Guild Hobby Horse.* 1888.
There is a Budding Morrow in Midnight. *Century Guild Hobby Horse.* 1889.
Cardinal Newman. *Athenæum.* Aug. 16, 1890.
An Echo from Willowwood. *Magazine of Art.* Sept., 1890.
Yea, I Have a Goodly Heritage. *Atalanta.* Oct., 1890.
A Death of a First-Born. *Literary Opinion.* Jan. and Feb., 1892.
Faint yet Pursuing. *Literary Opinion.* 1892.
The House of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. (Prose.) *Literary Opinion.* 1892.
The Way of the World. *Magazine of Art.* July, 1894.
Ash Wednesday.
Lent. *Dawn of Day.* Feb., 1894.
The Chinaman. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti, his Family Letters.* 1895.
The P.-R. B. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti, his Family Letters.* 1895.
Maude. With an introduction by W. M. Rossetti. James Bowden. London, 1897.

Volumes of Published Works, with Dates of Publication.

First Verses. Privately printed by G. Polidori, London, 1842.
Verses. Privately printed at G. Polidori's, London, 1847.
Goblin Market, and Other Poems. With two designs by D. G. Rossetti. Macmillan & Co. Cambridge, 1862.
Goblin Market, and Other Poems. Second edition. Macmillan & Co. Cambridge, 1865.
The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems. With two designs by D. G. Rossetti. Macmillan & Co. London, 1866.
Poems. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1866.
Poems. New edition enlarged. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1876.
Outlines for Illuminating. Consider. A poem. A. D. F. Randolph & Co. New York, 1866.
Il Mercato de Folletti (Goblin Market); poema tradolto in Italiano da T. P. Rossetti. Firenze, 1867.
Commonplace, and Other Short Stories. F. S. Ellis. London, 1870.

Commonplace, and Other Short Stories. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1870.

Sing-Song, A Nursery rhyme book. With 120 illustrations by Arthur Hughes, engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. George Routledge and Sons. London, 1872.

Sing-Song. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1872.

Sing-Song. Another Edition. George Routledge and Sons. London, 1878.

Sing-Song. Another Edition. Macmillan & Co. London, 1893.

Annus Domini, a prayer for each day of the year, founded on a text of Holy Scripture. Edited by the Rev. H. W. Burrows. James Parker & Co. London, 1874.

Annus Domini. Roberts Bros. Boston.

Speaking Likenesses. With pictures thereof by Arthur Hughes. Macmillan & Co. London, 1874.

Speaking Likenesses. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1874.

Goblin Market, The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems. With four designs by D. G. Rossetti. New Edition. Macmillan & Co. London, 1875. Reprinted, 1879, 1884, 1888.

Seek and Find. A double series of short studies of the Benedicite. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London, 1879.

A Pageant, and Other Poems. Macmillan & Co. London, 1881. Passages from the Bible relating to the Saints, with meditations.

Poems. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1882.

Letter and Spirit. Notes on the Commandments. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London, 1883.

Time Flies : a Reading Diary. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London, 1885.

Time Flies. Roberts Bros. Boston, 1886.

Poems. (With designs by D. G. Rossetti.) New and enlarged Edition. Macmillan & Co. London, October, 1890. Reprinted, Dec., 1890, Feb. and Aug., 1891, 1892, 1894, 1895, 1896.

The Face of the Deep : a devotional commentary on the Apocalypse. (With the Text.) Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London, 1892.

The Face of the Deep. E. and J. B. Young & Co. New York, 1892.

Goblin Market. Illustrated by Laurence Housman. Macmillan & Co. London, 1893.

Verses. Reprinted from *Called to be Saints, Time Flies,* and *The Face of the Deep.* Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London, 1893.

New Poems by Christina Rossetti, hitherto unpublished or uncollected. Edited by William Michael Rossetti. Macmillan & Co. London and New York, 1896.

The Rossetti Birthday Book. Edited by Olivia Rossetti. Macmillan & Co. London and New York, 1896.

Maude. With an Introduction by W. M. Rossetti. James Bowden. London, 1897.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

This list is compiled almost entirely from the recent admirable list by Mr. Marillier, omitting, however, the descriptions, remarks, and verifications based upon his own extensive research. It will be noticed that one painting, No. 3, is not included in any previous list. This early and interesting study is in the possession of Samuel Bancroft, Jr., of Wilmington, Delaware.

PAINTINGS.

1. 1848. Gabriele Rossetti. (*Oil.*)
2. 1848. Christina Rossetti. (*Oil.*)
3. 1848. Oil Study of Bottles and Drapery, with Reclining Figure introduced at a later period.
4. 1848–9. The Girlhood of Mary Virgin. (*Oil.*)
5. 1849. "Hist! said Kate the Queen." From *Pippa Passes.* (*Oil.*) Unfinished.
6. 1849. The Laboratory. From Browning. (*Water-colour.*)
7. 1850. Ecce Ancilla Domini. (*Oil.*)
8. 1850. Rossovestita. (*Water-colour.*)
9. 1851. Borgia. (*Water-colour.*)
10. 1851. Beatrice at a Marriage Feast, Denying her Salutation to Dante. (*Water-colour.*)
11. 1851. "Hist! said Kate the Queen." (*Small design in oil.*)
12. 1852. Two Mothers. (*Oil.*)

13. 1852. Giotto painting Dante's Portrait. (*Water-colour.*)
14. 1852. "Guardami ben ; ben son, ben son Beatrice:" The Meeting of Beatrice and Dante in Paradise. (*Water-colour.*) Left compartment of triptych, "Il Saluto di Beatrice."
15. 1853. Miss Charlotte Polidori. (*Oil.*)
16. 1853. Dante Drawing the Angel. (*Water-colour.*)
17. 1853. Girl Singing to a Lute. (*Water-colour.*)
18. 1853. Carlisle Wall, or The Lovers. (*Water-colour.*)
19. 1854. Found. (*Oil.*) Worked upon at intervals up to 1882 and left incomplete. Sky finally washed in by Burne-Jones.
20. 1854. Head of Miss Siddal. (*Water-colour.*)
21. 1854. Arthur's Tomb ; The Last Meeting of Launcelot and Guinevere. (*Water-colour.*)
22. 1855. The Annunciation. (*Water-colour.*)
23. 1855. La Belle Dame sans Mercy. (*Water-colour.*)
24. 1855. Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. (*Water-colour.*) Diptych.
25. 1855. Matilda Gathering Flowers. From *Purgatorio.* (*Water-colour.*)
26. 1855. Miss Siddal, seated on Ground. (*Water-colour.*)
27. 1855. Robert Browning. (*Water-colour.*)
28. 1855. Dante's Vision of Rachel and Leah. From *Purgatorio.* (*Water-colour.*)
29. 1855. The Nativity. (*Water-colour.*)
30. 1855–9. The Carol. (*Water-colour.*)
31. 1855–6. Beatrice Denying Salutation. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 10.
32. 1855–6. Passover in the Holy Family. (*Water-colour.*) Unfinished.
33. 1856. Dante's Dream. (*Water-colour.*) A small and early version.
34. 1856. Fra Pace. (*Water-colour.*)
35. 1856. The Seed of David : Christ Adored by a Shepherd and a King. With Two Figures of David. (*Water-colour.*) First sketches for the Llandaff Triptych.
36. 1856? Miss Eliza Polidori. (*Oil.*)
37. 1857. The Damsel of the Sanc Grael. (*Water-colour.*)

38. 1857–65. Death of Breuse sans Pitié. (*Water-colour.*) Retouched or repainted in 1865.
39. 1857–64. The Chapel before the Lists. (*Water-colour.*)
40. 1857. The Tune of Seven Towers. (*Water-colour.*)
41. 1857. The Blue Closet. (*Water-colour.*)
42. 1857. The Wedding of St. George and the Princess Sabra. (*Water-colour.*)
43. 1857. The Gate of Memory. (*Water-colour.*)
44. 1857. The Garden Bower. (*Water-colour.*)
45. 1857. "Gwendolen in the Witch Tower": A Knight Arming. From the Christmas Mystery of *Sir Galahad*. (*Oil.*) Two panels on chairs, done for William Morris.
46. 1857. Launcelot at the Shrine of the Sanc Grael. (*Tempera.*) Mural design for Oxford Reading-Room. Now perished.
47. 1857. St. Cecilia. (*Water-colour.*) Same design as Tennyson woodcut.
48. 1857. St. Catherine. (*Oil.*)
49. 1857–8. A Christmas Carol. (*Water-colour.*)
50. 1858. Mary in the House of St. John. (*Water-colour.*)
51. 1858. Golden Water of Princess Parisade. From the *Arabian Nights*. (*Water-colour.*)
52. 1858. Ruth and Boaz. (*Water-colour.*)
53. 1858. Before the Battle. (*Water-colour.*)
54. 1859. Head of Christ. (*Water-colour* and *Oil.*)
55. c. 1859. Giotto painting Dante's Portrait. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 13. Unfinished.
56. 1859. Mary in the House of St. John. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 50.
57. 1859. Sir Galahad at the Shrine. (*Water-colour.*) Same design as Tennyson woodcut.
58. 1859. My Lady Greensleeves. (*Water-colour.*)
59. 1859. Bocca Baciata. (*Oil.*)
60. 1859. The Salutation of Beatrice. Dante meeting Beatrice in Florence and in Paradise. (*Oil.*) Two subjects. Panels painted on a cabinet for William Morris.
61. 1859. Dantis Amor. (*Oil.*) Painted on panel of a cabinet for William Morris.

62. 1860. Bonifazio's Mistress. (*Water-colour.*)
63. 1860? "Sweet Tooth." (*Water-colour.*)
64. 1860–1. Lucretia Borgia Administering the Poison-Draught. (*Water-colour.*)
65. 1860–64. Triptych in Llandaff Cathedral. (*Oil.*) Subjects: The Adoration, and on either side David as Shepherd and David as King.
66. 1861. Love's Greeting. (*Oil.*) Panel.
67. 1861? Dr. Johnson at the Mitre. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 265.
68. 1861. Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. (*Water-colour.*) Drawing of first compartment of diptych No. 24.
69. 1861. Regina Cordium. (*Oil.*) Panel. Portrait of Rossetti's wife.
70. 1861. Regina Cordium. (*Oil.*) Portrait of Mrs. Aldam Heaton.
71. 1861. Burd Alane. (*Oil.*) Attributed to Rossetti.
72. 1861. Fair Rosamund. (*Oil.*)
73. 1861? The Farmer's Daughter. (*Water-colour.*) A study for "Found," and possibly of earlier date.
74. 1861. The Annunciation. (*Water-colour.*) Design for two panels painted in oil on the pulpit of St. Martin's Church, Scarborough.
75. 1861. King René's Honeymoon. Design for panel "Music." (*Water-colour?*) Copied in oil on the cabinet built for J. P. Seddon by Morris and Co.
76. 1861. Spring. (*Water-colour.*) Design for small panel on Seddon cabinet.
77. 1861. The Painter's Wife. (Miss Siddal.) (*Water-colour.*)
78. 1861. Algernon Charles Swinburne. (*Water-colour.*)
79. 1862. Tristram and Yseult Drinking the Love-Potion. (*Water-colour* on cartoon.) One of the series commissioned by Morris, Marshall, Falkner, and Co. for stained-glass windows in Birket Foster's house.
80. 1862? Christ in Glory. (*Water-colour.*)
81. 1862. Bethlehem Gate. (*Water-colour.*)

82. 1862. St. George and the Princess Sabra. (*Water-colour.*) St. George washing hands in a helmet.
83. 1862. Girl at a Lattice. (*Oil.*)
84. 1862. Heart of the Night, or Mariana in the Moated Grange. (*Water-colour.*) Same design as Tennyson woodcut.
85. c. 1862. Amor, Amans, Amata. (*Oil.*) Three oval panels on Rossetti's sofa.
86. 1862. Paolo and Francesca. (*Water-colour.*)
87. 1862. Joan of Arc. (*Oil.*)
88. 1862. Fanny Cornforth (Mrs. Schott). (*Oil.*)
89. 1862. Mrs. Leathart. (*Oil.*)
90. 1863? Miss Herbert. (*Oil.*)
91. 1863? Miss Herbert. Study in gold and umber on white paper.
92. 1863. Beata Beatrix. (*Oil.*)
93. 1863. Helen of Troy. (*Oil.*)
94. 1863. St. George Slaying the Dragon. (*Water-colour.*)
95. 1863. Belcolore. (*Oil.*)
96. 1863. Brimfull. (*Water-colour.*)
97. 1863. A Lady in Yellow. (*Water-colour.*)
98. 1863. Fazio's Mistress. (*Oil.*) Also called Aurelia.
99. 1863. Borgia. (*Water-colour.*)
100. 1864? King René's Honeymoon. (*Oil?*) Replica of No. 75.
101. 1864. Lady in White at her Toilet. (*Oil.*)
102. 1864. Lady Lilith. (*Oil.*)
103. 1864. Venus Verticordia. (*Oil.*) First version.
104. 1864. Venus Verticordia. (*Water-colour.*) Second and smaller version.
105. 1864. Morning Music. (*Water-colour.*)
106. 1864. Monna Pomona. (*Water-colour.*)
107. 1864. "How Sir Galahad, Sir Bors, and Sir Percival were Fed with the Sanc Grael, but Sir Percival's Sister Died by the Way." (*Water-colour.*)
108. 1864. Roman de la Rose. (*Water-colour.*)
109. 1864. The Madness of Ophelia. (*Water-colour.*)
110. 1864. Socrates Taught to Dance by Aspasia. (*Wash.*)
111. 1864. Il Saluto di Beatrice: Meeting of Dante and Beatrice in Florence and in Paradise. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of panel diptych No. 60.

112. 1864. Beatrice in Paradise. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of left compartment of triptych "Il Saluto di Beatrice." No. 14.

113. 1864. How They Met Themselves. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 264.

114. 1864. How They Met Themselves. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of Nos. 264, 113.

115. 1864. Joan of Arc. (*Water-colour.*) Another version of No. 87.

116. 1864 ? Joan of Arc. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 87.

117. 1865. The Blue Bower. (*Oil.*)

118. 1865. The Merciless Lady. (*Water-colour.*)

119. 1865. Fight for a Woman. (*Water-colour.*)

120. 1865. Washing Hands. (*Water-colour.*)

121. 1865. Il Ramoscello, or Bella e Buona. (*Oil.*)

122. 1865. Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon. (*Oil.*) Replica of No. 56.
(It is possible that this picture is not entirely Rossetti's work.)

123. 1865. Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 56.

124. 1865. Hesterna Rosa. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 234.

125. c. 1865. Boccaccio's "Fiammetta." (*Oil.*) Head only.

126. 1865. Mrs. Vernon Lushington. (*Water-colour.*)

127. 1865–6. The Beloved, or The Bride. (*Oil.*)

128. 1866. Monna Vanna. (*Oil.*) Renamed Belcolore.

129. 1866–70. Sibylla Palmifera. (*Oil.*)

130. 1866. The Dancing Girl, or Daughter of Herodias. (*Oil.*)

131. 1866. Regina Cordium. (*Oil.*)

132. 1866. Hamlet and Ophelia. (*Water-colour.*)

133. 1866. The Painter's Mother. (*Oil.*)

134. 1867. A Christmas Carol. (*Oil.*)

135. 1867. Joli Cœur. (*Oil.*)

136. 1867. Monna Rosa. (*Oil.*)

137. 1867. The Loving-Cup. (*Oil.*)

138. 1867. The Loving-Cup. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 137.

139. 1867. The Loving-Cup. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 137.

140. 1867. The Loving-Cup. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 137.
141. 1867. The Return of Tibullus to Delia. (*Water-colour.*)
142. 1867. Aurora. (*Water-colour.*)
143. 1867. Tessa La Bionda.
144. 1867. Tristram and Yseult Drinking the Love-Potion. (*Water-colour.*)
145. 1867. Lilith. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 102.
146. 1867. Lilith. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 102.
147. 1868. Bionda del Balcone. (*Water-colour.*) Enlarged replica of Bocca Baciata.
148. 1868. The Rose—A Lady at a Window. (*Water-colour.*)
149. 1868. The Return of Tibullus to Delia. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 141.
150. 1868. Venus Verticordia. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 103.
151. 1868. St. George and the Princess Sabra. (*Water-colour.*)
152. 1868. Mrs. Leyland. (*Oil.*)
153. 1868. Mrs. Morris. (*Oil.*)
154. 1870. Mariana. (*Oil.*)
155. 1871. Lucretia Borgia. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 64.
156. 1871. Elena's Song. (*Water-colour.*) Replica on a larger scale of Hesterna Rosa.
157. 1871. Beata Beatrix. (*Water-colour.*) Small replica of No. 92.
158. 1871. Pandora. (*Oil.*)
159. 1871. Water-Willow. (*Oil.*)
160. 1871–81. Dante's Dream. (*Oil.*)
161. 1872. Beata Beatrix. (*Oil.*) Replica with predella of No. 92.
162. 1872. The Bower Meadow. (*Oil.*)
163. 1872. Head of Beatrice. (*Oil.*)
164. 1872. Veronica Veronese. (*Oil.*)
165. 1872. Proserpine. (*Oil.*)
166. 1872. Blanzifiore. (*Oil.*)
167. c. 1872. Lady in Blue Dress. (*Water-colour.*)
168. 1873. La Ghirlandata. (*Oil.*)
169. 1873–7. Proserpine. (*Oil.*)

170. 1874. Proserpine. (*Oil.*) Replica of No. 169.
171. 1874. The Damsel of the Sanc Grael. (*Oil.*)
172. 1874. The Roman Widow. (*Oil.*)
173. c. 1874. The Boat of Love. (*Grisaille.*)
174. 1874. Rosa Triplex. (*Water-colour.*) Replica of No. 333.
175. 1874. The Blessed Damozel. (*Oil.*) Sometimes called Sancta Lilias.
176. 1874. Marigolds; also called Fleurs de Marie, Bower Maiden, and Gardener's Daughter. (*Oil.*)
177. 1875. La Bella Mano. (*Oil.*)
178. 1875–7. The Blessed Damozel, with predella. (*Oil.*)
179. 1876. Mnemosyne, or The Lamp of Memory. Also called Ricordanza. (*Oil.*)
180. 1876. Domizia Scaligera. (*Oil.*) Unfinished.
181. 1877. Mary Magdalene. (*Oil.*)
182. 1877. Astarte Syriaca. (*Oil.*)
183. 1877. The Sea-spell. (*Oil.*)
184. 1877. Beata Beatrix. Unfinished replica of No. 92, worked on by Madox Brown. (*Oil.*)
185. 1878. A Vision of Fiammetta. (*Oil.*)
186. 1878. Bruna Brunelleschi. (*Water-colour.*)
187. 1878–80. Gretchen, or Risen at Dawn. (*Oil.*)
188. 1879. La Donna della Finestra. (*Oil.*)
189. 1879. The Blessed Damozel. (*Oil.*) Replica of No. 178, but without groups of lovers in the background.
190. 1880. Dante's Dream. (*Oil.*) Reduced replica of No. 160, with double predella.
191. 1880. Proserpine. (*Water-colour.*) Reduced replica of No. 169.
192. 1880. Beata Beatrix. (*Oil.*) Large replica of No. 92.
193. 1880. The Day-Dream. (*Oil.*)
194. 1880–1. The Salutation of Beatrice. (*Oil.*) Unfinished.
195. 1880–1. The Salutation of Beatrice. (*Oil.*) Replica of No. 194, on a smaller scale.
196. 1881. La Donna della Finestra. Also called The Lady of Pity. (*Oil.*) Unfinished replica of No. 188.
197. 1881. La Pia. (*Oil.*)
198. 1882. Proserpine. (*Oil.*) Small replica of No. 169.
199. 1882. Joan of Arc. (*Oil.*) Replica of No. 115.

Drawings and Cartoons in Crayon, Coloured Chalk, Pencil, Etc.

200. 1834–47. Juvenilia and Student's Sketches.
201. 1846. W. M. Rossetti. (*Pencil.*)
202. 1847. Dante G. Rossetti. (*Pencil and White Chalk.*)
203. c. 1847 Miss Charlotte Polidori. (*Pencil.*)
204. 1848. The Sun may Shine, and We be Cold. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
205. 1848. Gretchen and Mephistopheles in the Chapel. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
206. 1848. Retro me Sathana. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
207. 1848. Genevieve. (*Pen-and-ink.*) From Coleridge.
208. c. 1848. Ulalume. (*Pen-and-ink.*) From Edgar A. Poe.
209. c. 1848. The Raven. (*Pen-and-ink.*) From Edgar A. Poe.
210. 1848. Gaetano Polidori. (*Pencil.*)
211. 1848? Christina Rossetti. (*Pencil.*)
212. 1848–9. Michael Scott's Wooing. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
213. 1848. Death of Marmion. (*Pencil.*)
214. 1849. Taurello's First Sight of Fortune. (*Pen-and-ink.*) From Browning.
215. 1849. The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice: Dante Drawing the Angel. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
216. 1849. Dorothy and Theophilus. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
217. 1849–50. Il Saluto di Beatrice. (*Pen-and-ink.*) First design for diptych of Dante and Beatrice.
218. 1850. Benedick and Beatrice. (*Pencil.*)
219. 1850. "To caper nimbly in a Lady's Chamber to the Lascivious Pleasing of a Lute." (*Pen-and-ink.*)
220. c. 1850. A Parable of Love. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
221. c. 1850. Major Calder Campbell. (*Pencil.*)
222. 1851. How They Met Themselves. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
223. 1852. Teodorico Pietrocola-Rossetti. (*Pencil.*)
224. 1852. Wm. Bell Scott. (*Crayon.*)
225. 1852. Ford Madox Brown. (*Pencil.*)
226. 1853. W. Holman Hunt. (*Pencil.*)
227. c. 1853. Miss Margaret Polidori. (*Pencil.*)
228. 1853. Gabriele Rossetti. (*Pencil.*)
229. 1853. The Painter's Mother. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
230. 1853. The Painter's Mother. (*Pen-and-ink.*)

231. 1853. Gaetano Polidori. (*Pencil.*)
232. 1853. D. G. and W. M. Rossetti. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
233. 1853. D. G. R. sitting to Miss Siddal. (*Pen-and-ink and Wash.*)
234. 1853. Hesterna Rosa. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
235. 1853. Fra Angelico Painting, and Giorgione Painting from a Model. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
239. 1853. Lo Marinaio oblia che passa per tal via. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
237. 1853. Girl Trundling an Infant. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
238. 1853. Studies for "Found" in Pen-and-ink and Pencil.
239. 1854. The Queen's Page. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
240. 1854? Miss Siddal. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
241. 1854. Miss Siddal Seated at Window. (*Pencil and Pen-and-ink.*)
242. 1854. The Painter's Mother. (*Pencil.*)
243. 1855. Dante G. Rossetti. (*India ink.*)
244. 1855. Tennyson reading *Maud*. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
245. 1855. The Maids of Elfen-Mere. (*Woodcut.*)
246. c. 1855. Dantesque Composition. (*Pencil.*)
247. c. 1855. Composition of Three Kneeling Figures. (*Pencil.*)
248. c. 1855. Era in Pensier d' Amor: From a Ballata of Cavalcanti. (*Pencil.*)
249. c. 1855. Cat's-Cradle. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
250. c. 1855. A Fencing Scene. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
251. 1856. Miss Siddal Reclining in an Arm-Chair. (*Pencil.*)
252. 1856? Miss Siddal in an Arm-Chair, Reading. (*Pencil.*)
253. 1856? Design for a Ballad. (*India ink.*)
254. 1856. Head of a Child with Bonnet. (*Pencil.*)
255. c. 1856. Faust and Margaret in the Prison. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
256. 1856–7. Five Designs for Moxon's *Tennyson*. (*Woodcuts.*)
257. 1857? St. Luke, the Painter. (*Crayon.*)
258. 1857. Miss Jane Burden, afterwards Mrs. Morris, æt. 18. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
259. 1857. Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival, Receiving the Sanc Grael. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
260. 1857. Launcelot escaping from Guinevere's Chamber. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
261. 1858. Hamlet and Ophelia. (*Pen-and-ink.*)

262. 1858. Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
263. 1859. Dantis Amor. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
264. 1860. How They Met Themselves. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
265. 1860. Dr. Johnson at the Mitre. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
266. 1860. Joseph accused by Potiphar's Wife. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
267. 1860. Head of Mrs. Morris. (*Pencil.*)
268. 1860. Giuseppe Maenza. (*Pencil.*)
269. 1860. Mrs. F. M. Brown. (*Pencil.*)
270. 1860. The Painter's Wife. (*Pencil.*)
271. 1860. Giuseppe Maenza. (*Pencil.*)
272. 1860. Algernon Charles Swinburne. (*Pencil.*)
273. 1860. Miss Herbert. (*Pencil.*)
274. 1860–1. The Rose Garden. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
275. 1861. The Painter's Wife. (*Pencil.*)
276. 1861. The Rose Garden. (*Etching.*)
277. 1861. John Ruskin. (*Red Chalk.*)
278. 1861. Mrs. H. T. Wells. (*Pencil.*)
279. 1861 ? Lady Burne-Jones. (*Pencil.*)
280. 1861. D. G. Rossetti. (*Pencil.*)
281. c. 1861. The Artist's Wife Standing before a Picture on an Easel. (*Pencil.*)
282. 1861. Lachesis. (*Pencil.*)
283. 1861. Cassandra. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
284 1861. Goblin Market. (*Woodcuts.*)
285. 1861. Adam and Eve before the Fall. *Cartoons.*)
286. 1861. Parable of the Vineyard. (*Cartoons.*)
287. 1861. The Crucifixion. (*Cartoon.*)
288. 1861. The Last Judgment. (*Cartoon.*)
289. 1861–2. St. George and the Dragon. (*Cartoons.*)
290. 1862 King René's Honeymoon. (*India ink.*)
291. 1862. St. Margaret. (*Cartoon.*)
292. 1862. Angel Swinging a Censer. (*Cartoon.*)
293. 1862. The Annunciation. (*Cartoon.*)
294. 1862. Joseph and Mary at the House of St. Elizabeth (*Cartoon.*)
295. 1862 Threshing. (*Sepia.*)
296. ? 1862 The Crucifixion. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
297. 1862. Miss Boyd. (*Pencil.*)

208. 1862. The Artist's Mother. (*Black and red Chalk.*)
209. c. 1862. The Hair-Net. (*Pencil.*)
300. c. 1862. The Laurel. (*Pencil.*)
301. 1863. Miss Henrietta Polidori. (*Pencil.*)
302. 1863. Miss Ada Vernon. (*Pencil.*)
303. 1865. Chas. A. Howell. (*Black Crayon.*)
304. c. 1865. Three Sang of Love Together. (*Pencil.*)
305. c. 1865. Aspecta Medusa. (*Pencil and Crayon.*)
306. c. 1865. Juliet and the Old Nurse. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
307. c. 1865. Circe. (*Crayon.*)
308. c. 1865. Diana. (*Crayon.*)
309. 1866. Michael Scott's Wooing. (*Crayon.*)
310. 1866. The Prince's Progress. (*Woodcuts.*)
311. c. 1866. Dantis Amor. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
312. 1866. Heart's-ease. (*Pencil.*)
313. 1866. Christina Rossetti. (*Crayon.*)
314. 1867. F. Madox Brown. (*Pencil.*)
315. 1867. Head of a Magdalen. (*Crayon.*)
316. 1867. Peace. (*Crayon.*)
317. 1867. Contemplation. (*Crayon.*)
318. 1867. Venus Verticordia. (*Crayon.*)
319. c. 1867–8. Lilith. (*Crayon.*)
320. c. 1867–8. Lilith. (*Crayon.*) Head and Bust.
321. 1868. Mrs. J. Fernandez: two subjects. (*Pencil and Crayon.*)
322. c. 1868. Ricorditi di me che son La Pia. (*Crayon.*)
323. c. 1868. Aurea Catena. (*Crayon.*)
324. 1868. Reverie. (*Crayon.*)
325. 1868. La Penserosa. (*Crayon.*)
326. 1869. Miss Calliope Coronio. (*Crayon.*)
327. 1869. Mrs. Howell. (*Crayon.*)
328. 1869. Mrs. Stillman. (Miss Marie Spartali.) (*Crayon.*)
329. 1869. The Sermon on the Mount. (*Cartoon.*)
330. 1869. La Donna della Finestra. (*Crayon.*)
331. 1869. Beata Beatrix. (*Crayon.*) Replica of No. 92.
332. 1869. A Portrait. (*Crayon.*)
333. c. 1869. Rosa Triplex. (*Crayon.*)
334. 1869. Penelope. (*Crayon.*)
335. 1869. La Mandolinata. (*Crayon.*)
336. 1869. A Girl Holding her Knees. (*Crayon.*)

337. c. 1869. Orpheus and Eurydice. (*Pencil.*)
338. 1869. Pandora. (*Crayon.*) Study for No. 158.
339. 1870. La Donna della Fiamma. (*Crayon.*)
340. 1870. Silence. (*Crayon.*)
341. 1870. The Roseleaf. (*Pencil.*)
342. 1870. The Prisoner's Daughter. (*Crayon.*)
343. 1870. The Couch. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
344. 1870. Lady with a Fan. (*Crayon.*)
345. 1870. Study for La Donna della Finestra, or the Lady of Pity. (*Crayon.*)
346. 1870. Study for La Donna della Finestra, or the Lady of Pity. (*Crayon.*)
347. 1870. Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon. (*Crayon.*)
348. c. 1870. Beata Beatrix. (*Crayon.*) Replica of No. 92.
349. 1870. Design for the Bride's Prelude. (*Pencil.*) Subject and date conjectural.
350. c. 1870. Troy Town. (*Crayon and Wash.*)
351. c. 1870? Death of Lady Macbeth. (*Pencil.*)
352. 1870–75. Studies for Dante's Dream. (*Crayon.*)
353. 1870. W. J. Stillman. (*Crayon.*)
354. 1870. Mrs. Virtue Tebbs. (*Crayon.*)
355. 1870. Dante G. Rossetti. (*Pencil.*)
356. 1870. Mrs. Aglaia Coronio. (*Crayon.*)
357. 1870? Mrs. Cassavetti and Miss Cassavetti. (*Crayons.*)
358. 1870. Miss Baring. (*Crayon.*)
359. 1870. Mrs. William Morris. (*Crayon.*)
360. 1871. Miss Jane and Miss May Morris. (*Crayon.*)
361. 1871. Proserpine. (*Crayon.*)
362. 1871. Perlascura. (*Crayon.*)
363. 1872. Pætus and Arria. (*Pencil.*)
364. c. 1872. La Gitana. (*Crayon.*)
365. 1872. Miss May Morris. (*Crayon?*)
366. 1872. Dr. Gordon Hake. (*Crayon.*)
367. 1872. Mrs. Valpy. (*Crayon.*)
368. 1873. Ligeia Siren. (*Crayon.*)
369. 1873. The Blessed Damozel. (*Crayon.*)
370. 1873. G. Gordon Hake. (*Crayon.*)
371. c. 1873. Mrs. Morris. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
372. 1874. Mrs. Lucy Rossetti. (*Coloured Chalk.*)
373. 1874. Theodore Watts-Dunton. (*Crayon.*)

374. 1874. Mrs. Schott. (*Crayon.*)
375. 1875. Mrs. Stillman. (*Crayon.*)
376. 1875. Mrs. Chas. A. Howell.
377. 1875. Portrait of Mrs. Morris with a Bowl of Flowers. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
378. 1875. The Blessed Damozel. (*Red Chalk.*)
379. c. 1875. Blessed Damozel. (*Crayon.*)
380. c. 1875. Madonna Pietra. (*Crayon.*)
381. 1875. The Question, also called The Sphinx. (*Pencil.*)
382. 1875. Astarte Syriaca. (*Pen-and-ink.*)
383. 1876. Head of a Magdalen. (*Crayon.*)
384. 1876. The Dulcimer. (*Crayon.*)
385. 1876. Spirit of the Rainbow. (*Crayon.*)
386. 1876. Forced Music. (*Crayon.*)
387. 1876. Lady Mount Temple. *Crayon.*)
388. 1876? Mrs. Stillman. (*Crayon.*)
389. 1877. Mrs. Rossetti and Christina Rossetti. (*Crayon.*)
390. 1877. Christina Rossetti. (*Crayon.*)
391. 1877. Christina Rossetti. (*Crayon.*)
392. 1877. The Painter's Mother. (*Crayon.*)
393. 1878-81 Desdemona's Death Song. (*Crayon, Pencil, etc.*) Designs for picture not executed.
394. 1879. Pandora. (*Crayon.*)
395. 1879. Sancta Lilias. (*Crayon.*)
396. 1879? F. R. Leyland. (*Crayon.*)
397. 1880. La Donna della Finestra, or The Lady of Pity. (*Crayon.*)
398. 1880. The Sonnet. (*Pen-and-ink.*)

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